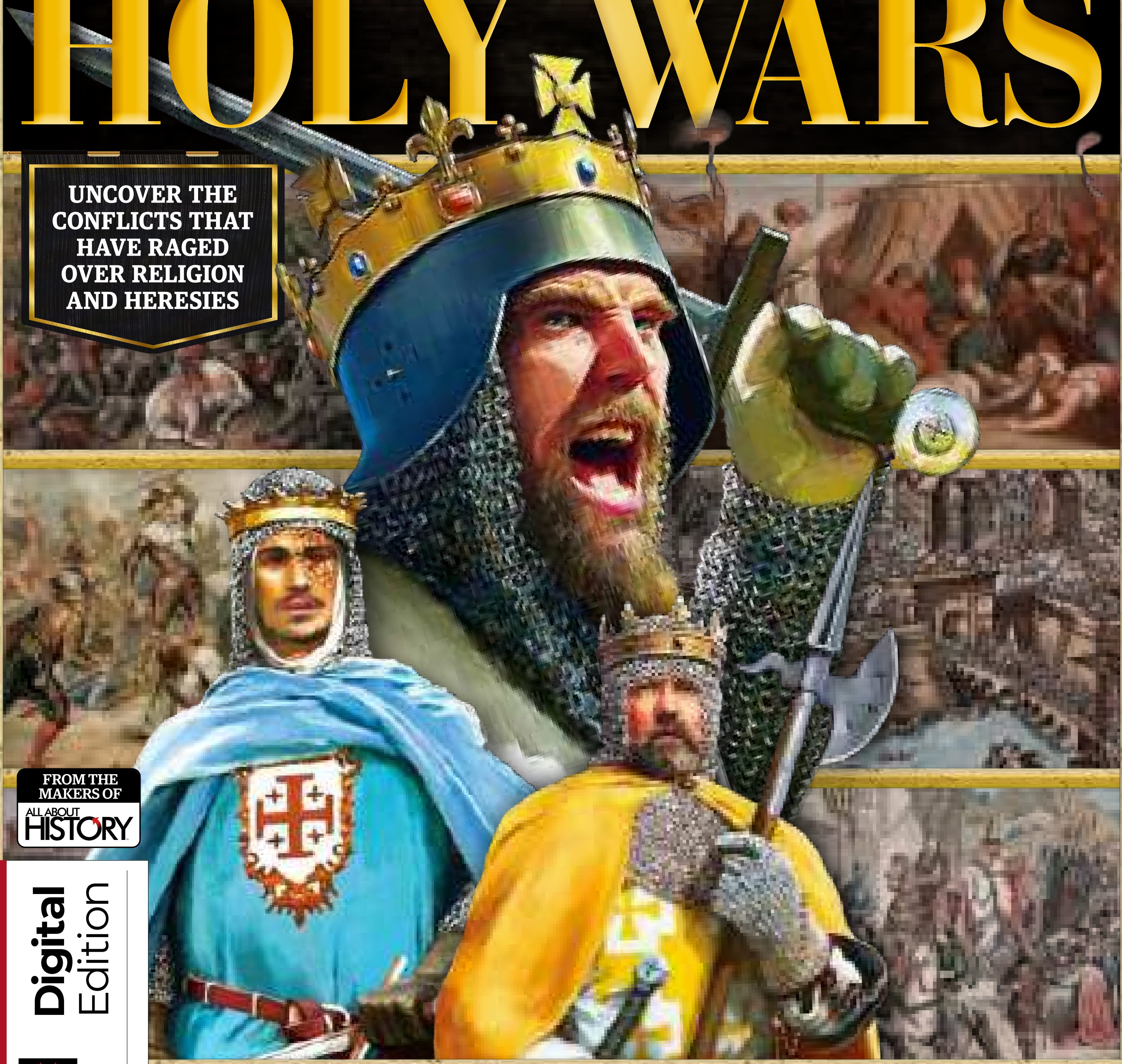
NEW

HERETICS AND HOLY WARS



UNCOVER THE CONFLICTS THAT HAVE RAGED OVER RELIGION AND HERESIES

FROM THE MAKERS OF ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Digital Edition

FUTURE
THIRD EDITION

RECONQUISTA ◆ THE CRUSADES ◆ EIGHTY YEARS' WAR

WELCOME TO

HERETICS AND HOLY WARS

As the Crusaders headed into battle, there was no doubt in their minds as to why they were marching into war - it was to show the glory of God. This wasn't the first time conflict had raged in the name of religion, and it was by no means the last. Ever since antiquity, deities and beliefs have caused some contention. Pagans and Christians were at loggerheads in Ancient Rome, while the Reformation saw new heresies sweep across Europe and tear nations in two. In All About History Heretics and Holy Wars, meet the reformers who changed the face of religion and go to the frontlines of the battles that were won for gods and ideals. Uncover the truth behind the Spanish Inquisition, and find out why the Qatif Conflict was restarted after nearly 30 years of peace. Explore the famous Crusades, and finally get up to date with the holy wars that are still raging around the world today.

FUTURE

HERETICS AND HOLY WARS

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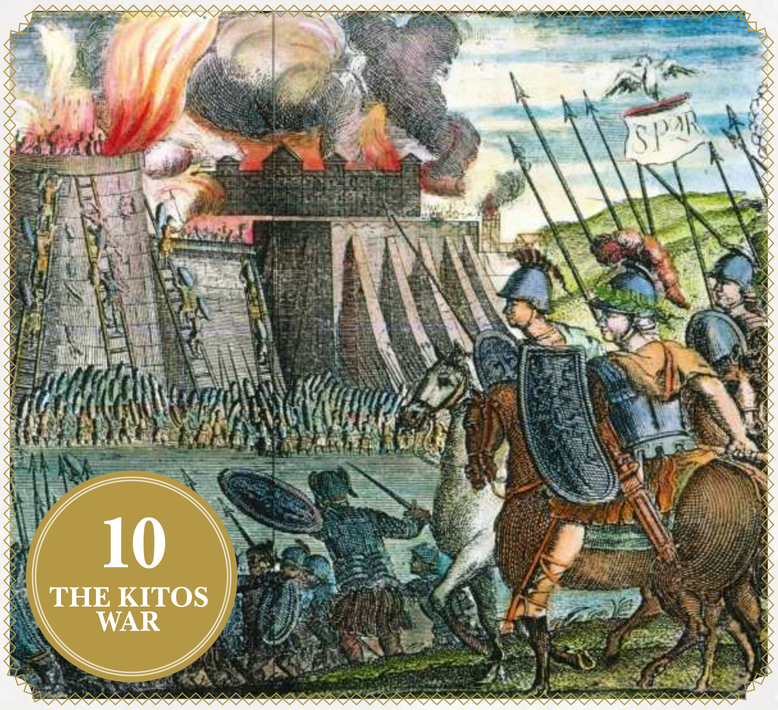
EARLY HERETICS



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THE KITOS WAR

After decades of oppression and strife, Jews rose up across the Roman Empire, leaving blood and destruction in their wake

Words by Hareth Al Bustani

When Pompey the Great seized Jerusalem in 63 BCE, he restored King Hyrcanus II with limited powers and celebrated his victory in outlandish style by entering the Holy of Holies - the inner sanctum of the Temple that only the Jewish high priest was allowed to enter. It was a fitting symbol of Rome's forthcoming relationship with its growing Jewish populace. Having repelled a Parthian invasion of Palestine, the Romans later installed the puppet king Herod in 37 BCE.

After Herod's death in 4 BCE, Judea was divided among his three sons, before Augustus established it as an official Roman province in 6 CE. Power was increasingly siphoned by the empire, until, by the time of Herod Agrippa II, the 'king' was little more than a figurehead ruling scattered pockets of territory. Instead, authority was administered by procurators responsible for levying taxes - positions they exploited for great personal gain. The Jewish court system was presided over by the Sanhedrin divided among two major groups: the Sadducees - wealthy elites, temple priests, courtiers and great landowners - and the Pharisees, a group of reformers, who enjoyed increasingly radical support among the masses.

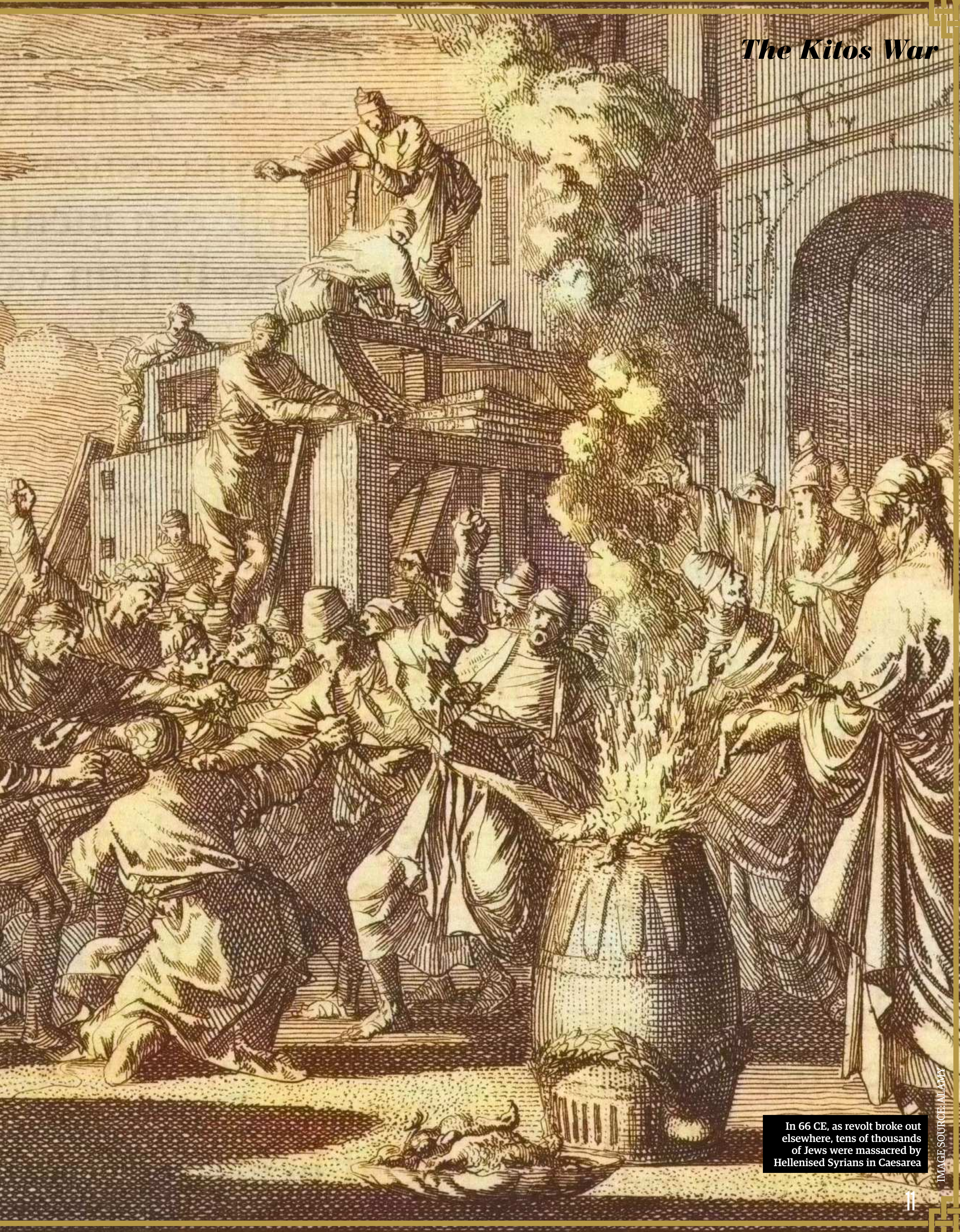
However, Rome had taken over the selection of high priests, leaving the Jewish religious hierarchy dominated by Roman lackeys. Living in perpetual strife, when Caligula demanded a statue be erected of himself at every temple in the empire, the Jews refused, and a massacre was only averted by his murder. On a smaller scale, Roman soldiers bared themselves at the Second Temple - built on the site of Solomon's Temple - and burned a copy of the Torah.

These incidents further radicalised a growing group of Zealots, who were committed to preserving their religious autonomy at all costs. The most hardcore had become known as the Sicarii, or 'Dagger Men', and they trawled Jerusalem, assassinating anyone friendly to Rome and spreading terror in their wake. Meanwhile, self-styled prophets, mystics and messiahs all spoke to a simmering desire for independence, working to stoke a growing fire of rebellion beneath the uncomfortable populace.

In 66 CE, the procurator of Jerusalem raided the Temple treasury, leading to the explosive First Jewish-Roman War, which culminated in a bloody siege of Jerusalem. In Caesarea, 20,000 Jews were massacred by a Hellenic Syrian mob in one hour. Meanwhile, in Alexandria, after a large number of Jews were killed, some even burned alive, a riot broke out. The Roman governor responded by sending 5,000 troops into the Jewish Quarter who went on to murder up to 50,000 men, women and children, pillage and burn houses.

In the aftermath, Jerusalem's Second Temple was razed to the ground, Jewish women and children were hauled off into slavery and men were thrown to gladiators and beasts at the circus. After being defeated, one of the revolt's leaders, Simon, was dragged from the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline across to the forum before being scoured by barbed whips and finally subjected to slow strangulation. An example had been set.

Having broken the first Jewish revolt, the Romans sought to break the Jewish spirit. This time, the great Temple could not be rebuilt, and both the high priesthood and Sanhedrin were abolished. Adding insult to injury, while women, children and the



In 66 CE, as revolt broke out elsewhere, tens of thousands of Jews were massacred by Hellenised Syrians in Caesarea

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

elderly had previously been exempt from Temple levies, now all Jews would have to contribute to the Roman treasury, with a new Jewish tax imposed across the empire for the upkeep of the pagan Temple of Jupiter. Such measures only served to crystallise and spread Jewish discontent.

Just three years after the Siege of Jerusalem, led by a Sicarii agent, the Jews of Cyrenaica, in eastern Libya, were beginning to whisper of rebellion. Although aristocratic Jews betrayed the nascent uprising to the local authorities, the Romans were indiscriminate in their response, executing 3,000 affluent Jews and appropriating their wealth. The Roman governor supposedly dragged the plot leader to Rome, coercing him into implicating Alexandrian 'accomplices', and even the chronicler Josephus – a claim that was later proved false.

In 113 CE, hoping to mimic the exploits of Alexander the Great, Emperor Trajan led an army to Armenia, forcing the Persians out and annexing the kingdom in the name of Rome before launching further campaigns into Parthia. Remarkably, in just three years he blitzed through Assyria and Mesopotamia, reaching as far as the Arabian Gulf. However, his army had not prepared to hold such an enormous line, stretching over 1,000 kilometres long. The Jews of Mesopotamia had enjoyed relative freedom under the Persians and dreaded the oppression of Roman rule. Within the empire Jewish discontent had long simmered since the last great revolt, and when an earthquake rocked Syria in 115 CE as the Greeks and Jews of Alexandria began to violently squabble one again, it reached boiling point.

With the emperor busy in the east, an insurrection spontaneously erupted in Cyrene led by a self-styled messianic figure either named Lukuas or Andreas. Before long the mob reached a vengeful frenzy, trawling the city for hapless Romans and Greeks, dragging them from their homes and tearing them apart in the streets. Cassius Dio says the mob grew drunk on bloodlust, eating their victims' flesh, making belts of their entrails, anointing themselves with blood

During the riots of Cyrene Jews targeted Greek pagan monuments – they were later restored by Hadrian

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

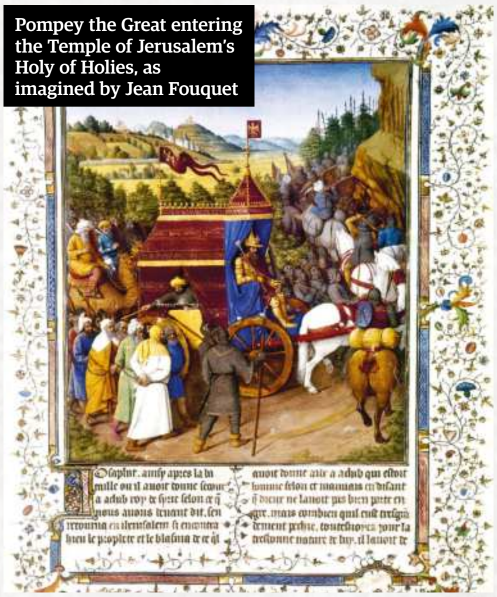

Pompey the Great entering the Temple of Jerusalem's Holy of Holies, as imagined by Jean Fouquet

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

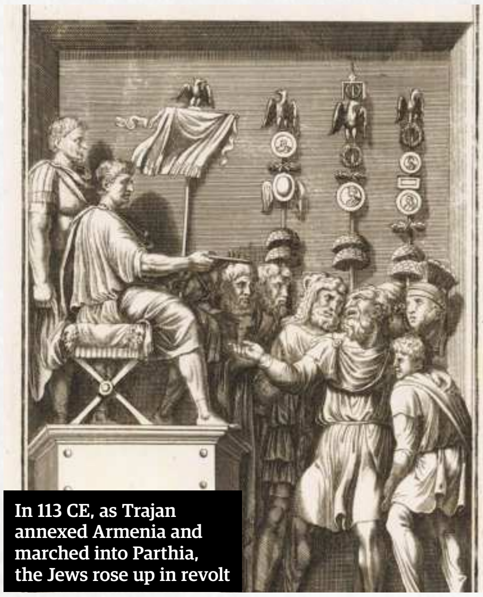

In 113 CE, as Trajan annexed Armenia and marched into Parthia, the Jews rose up in revolt

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

> "THE ROMANS WERE INDISCRIMINATE IN THEIR RESPONSE, EXECUTING 3,000"

THE FIRST ROMAN-JEWISH WAR

In 66 CE, Judea rose up in rebellion, with catastrophic results

In 66 CE, the Roman procurator Gessius Florus raided 17 talents of silver from the Temple treasury in Jerusalem "for Caesar's needs". In response, Jews began walking around the city carrying an empty basket and begging for change in open mockery of the procurator. Outraged, Florus marched on the city, demanding the jokers be handed over.

When the Sanhedrin refused, the procurator sent his men into the southwest quarter of the city. Jews of equestrian rank were rounded up, tried, scourged and crucified, with 3,600 dying in a single day. In response, crowds barricaded the streets and pelted soldiers from the rooftops, running the procurator out of Jerusalem. The governor of Syria sent an army to put them down but he was promptly routed and his surrendering soldiers murdered.

The Romans returned with a well-equipped army of 60,000, storming across the radical heartland of Galilee, killing or selling 100,000 Jews into slavery. Hardcore survivors fled to Jerusalem, where, under siege, they massacred moderate Jewish leaders and burned years of food supplies, hoping to radicalise the masses. The resultant siege was fought down to the Temple, with between 600,000 to 1.1 million people killed, many from starvation. The Sicarii put up a last stand at the fortress of Masada, committing mass suicide rather than ending up in Roman hands.

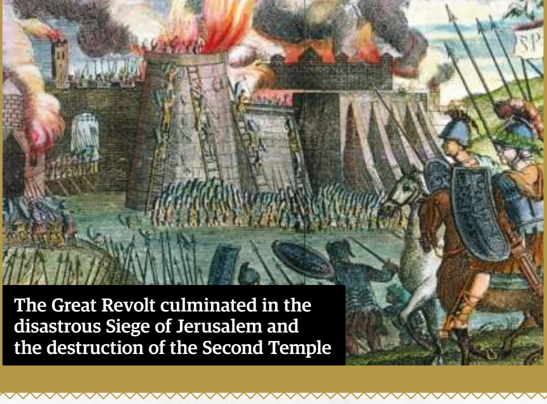

The Great Revolt culminated in the disastrous Siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

and wearing their skin for clothing. Some poor victims, he asserts, were sawn in half from the head downwards. Whether exaggerated or not, this was the culmination of years of oppression, an outpouring of fury against the pagan establishment that had massively overreached itself. Unleashing havoc, the pseudo-prophet Lukuas drove an unruly mass across the city, tearing up roads, burning down the Temple of Apollo and smashing the public baths to pieces alongside scores of other temples.

Greek survivors fled to Alexandria, where the terrified authorities desperately locked up and killed many of the city's Jews, but before long the insurrection had plundered and butchered its way across Egypt. Though many of Alexandria's Jews begged for peace, a great deal more cast off the yoke and rose up in rebellion, tearing down Pagan temples and desecrating the tomb of Pompey.

Panicked, Trajan sent General Quintus Marcus Turbo at the head of an enormous fleet of ships loaded up with men and cavalry to deal with the revolt, which had by now taken control of the mouth of the Nile Delta with a modest fleet of ships, some captured from the Romans.

By the time Marcus arrived the rebels had scorched the earth and laid waste to cities. As he scrambled onto land he called in reinforcements from the Egyptian peasantry, fighting numerous pitched battles, pushing the rebels back with great difficulty before fighting bitterly in the cities, taking them street by street. By the time he put down the revolt, tens of thousands had been butchered. Trajan confiscated Jewish property to fund the necessary repairs.

Though there is little evidence to suggest co-ordination, another self-styled messiah, Artemion, simultaneously whipped the Jews of Cyprus into a similar frenzy, capturing and sacking Salamis and massacring 240,000 of its Greek inhabitants - thereby virtually wiping out the non-Jewish population.

Further rebellions broke out in Mesopotamia - home to 1 million Jews - a region particularly aggrieved by the Roman occupation. With the Parthians beginning to mount serious counter-attacks against the over-extended Romans, the empire could ill-afford to fight a Jewish rebellion the likes of which it put down years earlier.

As discontent spread across the diaspora towards Judea, dissolving Trajan's army's rear, the emperor sent for Lusius Quietus, or 'Kitos', a Moorish commander, to organise an army to deal with the rebels of the east. Quietus marched across Mesopotamia, putting scores of Jews to the sword before securing Syria and Palestine, quelling sedition through brutal force. His campaign culminated in a final bloody showdown in Cyprus - a chaotic engagement across a ravaged land.

After the revolt was finally put down and the mob dispersed, the island banned all Jews, forcing them to resettle or face death. Even those who were washed ashore by accident could be executed. For his decisive campaigns, Quietus was named governor of Judea, where he introduced forced Hellenisation.

The first revolt ended at the mountain fortress of Masada, where the extremist Sicarii committed mass suicide rather than surrender

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

The rabbis continued to resist, albeit peacefully, by ordering Jewish fathers not to teach their children to speak Greek. Having amassed considerable power, wealth and influence, Quietus - subsequently remembered as one of the most effective Roman generals of all time - would later be executed by Emperor Hadrian, deemed too great a threat to let live.

In the ensuing years Jews began stockpiling weapons, digging secret tunnels and building hidden fortifications across Judea. They rose up one last time in 132 CE, united under the sole leadership of Simon Bar Kokhba.

Known as the Bar Kokhba - Son of the Star - Revolt, it was sparked by Hadrian's plans to build a Pagan city on the ruins of Jerusalem. The angered rebels were well organised, establishing an independent Jewish state, minting coins, electing a high priest, confiscating Roman property and re-establishing the Sanhedrin. However, having withdrawn from Mesopotamia, Hadrian was able to direct the equivalent of 12 whole legions' worth of men towards the rebels.

Though the Jews fought hard, seemingly annihilating one legion completely, Hadrian eventually surrounded them at Bethar. Seeking to deter further uprisings, he had them butchered with unbridled ferocity.

During the war 50 Jewish strongholds and 985 villages were destroyed and 580,000 Jews put to the sword, sounding a death knell for the Jewish nation that would ring for 1,800 years.

After the first Great Revolt failed, the Romans abolished the high priesthood and Sanhedrin, introducing a Jew tax to finance the Temple of Jupiter

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

A FAITH DIVIDED:
HERESY IN THE ROMAN AND BYZANTINE EMPIRES

From its earliest days, Christianity grappled with issues that tore the new faith apart, and more than a few casualties were caught in the crossfire

Words by Jon Wright

At the beginning of the 2nd century CE, Ignatius of Antioch found himself en route to Rome, where he was destined to become one of the first great martyrs of the Christian Church. His journey as a prisoner was unpleasant, courtesy of the thuggish imperial officers who accompanied him - he compared them to vicious leopards. But Ignatius carved out some time to write letters to the fledgling Christian communities scattered around the Mediterranean. He insisted, over and over again, that they all shared a duty to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement". Any who dissented were to be denounced as heretics - people who "mix up Jesus Christ with their own poison like those who administer a deadly drug in sweet wine". The trouble was that what counted as sweet theological wine in the early years of Christianity was very much a matter of taste.

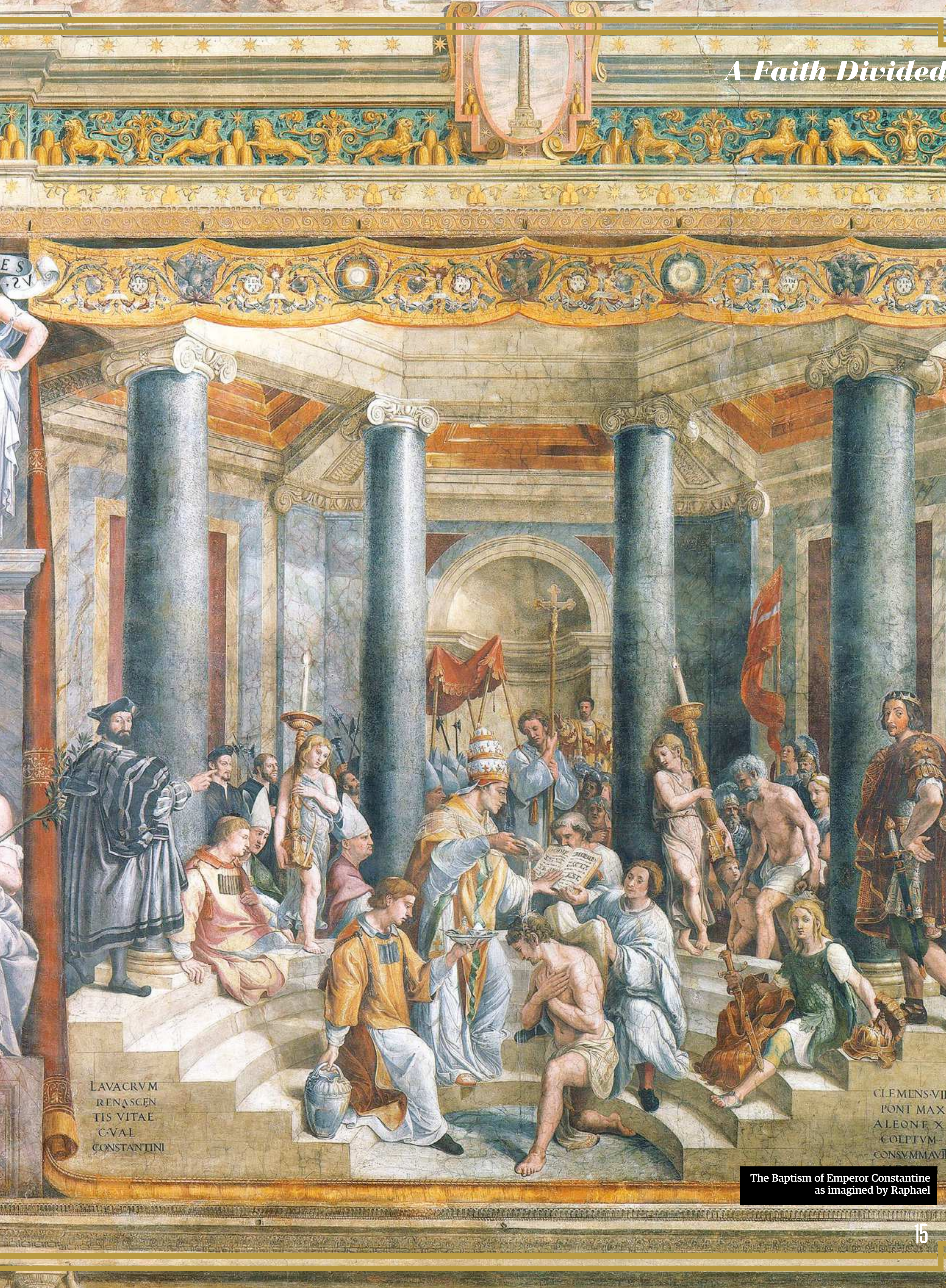
Christianity didn't fall fully formed from the sky. Debates about doctrine, ritual and the religious books that should be regarded as authentic would rage for centuries; one man's heretic was another's hero. Christianity suffered periods of persecution at the hands of the Roman authorities, but its internal divisions were, in their own way, just as damaging. Or perhaps they were simply necessary. It was by codifying mainstream tenets of belief and outlawing certain ideas that a workable concept of orthodoxy emerged.

Pagan observers rather enjoyed the spectacle of Christians engaging in so many squabbles. For the 2nd-century philosopher Celsus, this demonstrated the ludicrous, fragmented nature of the new faith. Christians, Celsus sniped, resembled frogs croaking discordantly in a swamp. And yet heresy also possessed a creative power. Its existence pushed the Church towards decisions that would shape Christianity for close to two millennia.

HOW MANY GODS?

One of the most intriguing - some might say notorious - early heretics was Marcion, a wealthy ship owner from the Black Sea region. During the 2nd century he took the radical step of casting off the legacy of Judaism in its entirety. Only a handful of texts associated with Jesus and his followers were to be regarded as holy, and the Hebrew Scriptures were to be utterly rejected. They were nothing more than deceptions pedalled by a second, wrathful deity who could not possibly be related to the kindly God of the Christian scriptures.

Needless to say, Marcion's talk of a second, evil deity caused uproar in an avowedly monotheistic religion, but he managed to attract an impressive number of followers who happily ignored the fact that he was being denounced by leading churchmen as "the first born of Satan". Epiphanius could grumble that "all the devil's ugliness" was in


LAVACRVM
RENASCEN
TIS VITAE
C·VAL
CONSTANTINI
CLEMENS·VII
PONT MAX
A LEONE X
COEPTVM
CONSVMMAVIT

The Baptism of Emperor Constantine as imagined by Raphael

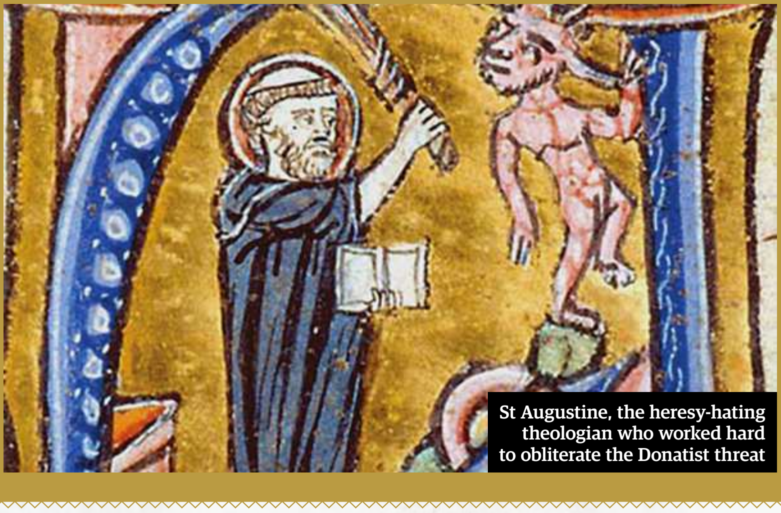
IMAGE SOURCE: FINE ART / CONTRIBUTOR / GETTY IMAGES

CIRCUMCELLIONS: THE CLUB-WIELDING HERETICS

4th- and 5th-century North Africa was home to some particularly zealous heretics

The Donatist movement was the cause of many headaches for the self-styled arbiters of orthodoxy, but the so-called Circumcellions received a particularly bad press. If we are to believe the terrible stories (and caution is required here), these rural bands wandered around the North African countryside seeking martyrdom and beating up anyone who offended them. They were, Augustine wrote, "men most notorious for their outrages", which allegedly included attacking imperial troops and dragging wealthy landowners from their carriages. For Filastrius, bishop of Brescia, they were a "death sect" composed of men who sought martyrdom by any means possible. They would throw themselves from cliffs and rooftops, drown themselves, and ask perfect strangers to stab them in the belly in order to achieve what they regarded as a holy death. We must wonder, however, if the tales are accurate.

Every writer told more or less the same stories about the Circumcellions, which either signals accuracy or reminds us that creating caricatured bogeymen was a useful strategy for those who wanted to quash dissent in the North African Church. Augustine was clear on the matter: there truly were "rough and most audacious slaves of demons" causing havoc. The historian must wonder if the rhetoric outstripped the reality. We'll likely never know.



St Augustine, the heresy-hating theologian who worked hard to obliterate the Donatist threat

Emperor Constantine V was not a fan of icons

the "vile minds" of Marcion's followers, but they were not easily discouraged.

Similarly impressive strides were made by the various branches of Gnosticism, which also adopted a dualistic position. The whole material world was the creation of a malevolent demiurge and the true God, the God of the Spirit, had long since abandoned interest in the fleshly realm. Happily, some human beings (a tiny minority) retained a spark of that spirit, and through the acquisition of secret knowledge (gnosis) they could hope to escape the sordid world when they died and look forward to eternal bliss. Christ's teachings offered the route to such enlightenment.

Such ideas were certainly located at the extreme end of the doctrinal spectrum, but the underlying issue of how a god could exist in the material world refused to go away. The so-called Docetists offered an elegant if controversial solution: Christ could not truly have been made of flesh and blood, and if it seemed that he was then this was merely an illusion. This was the beginning of a debate about the relationship between Christ's humanity and divinity that would simmer away for hundreds of years – indeed, it simmers still.

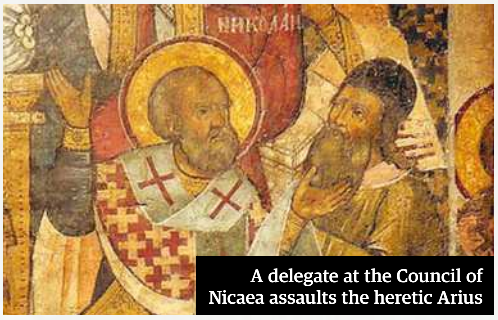
> "AS THE THEODOSIAN CODE PUT IT, HERETICS WERE 'DEMENTED'"

At first such questions only concerned a buffeted Christian minority, but everything changed at the beginning of the 4th century. When Emperor Constantine granted Christianity legal status in 313 CE, through the Edict of Milan, solving such riddles and sustaining Christian unity became a matter of political necessity and social order. The stakes were raised even higher when Christianity was made the empire's only acceptable faith in 380 CE.

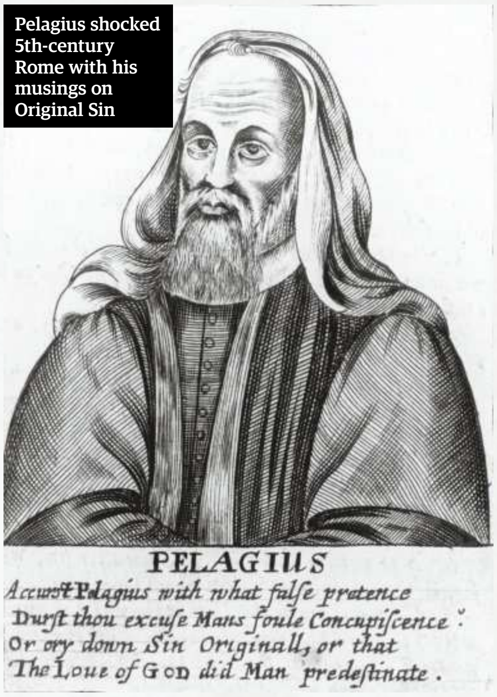
A staggering number of solutions to the so-called Christological problem were proposed and ferocious arguments were unleashed at the early Church Councils. It was not unknown for partisans of clashing theologies to fight in the streets while the learned clerics hammered out their positions. In cities like Antioch, Ephesus and Alexandria – the engine rooms of the early Church at a time when Rome was just a backwater – talk of the nature of Christ was on every Christian's lips. It was impossible, according to Gregory of Nyssa, to buy a loaf of bread or ask for change in a city like Constantinople without someone engaging you in Christological debate.

Christianity's emergence as the empire's dominant faith was, of course, terrible news for paganism and, with alarming ease, the formerly persecuted became the persecutors. Towards the end of the 4th century, Libanius lamented how Christians would gleefully "attack the temples with sticks and stones and bars of iron" and indulge in the "tearing down of statues and the overthrow of altars". The Church's duty to put its own house in order was every bit as important, and the nature of Christ proved to be one of the key dividing lines between heresy and orthodoxy. The threat of coercion soon arrived on the scene. As the Theodosian Code of 438 CE put it, heretics were "demented and insane" and, while they would be "smited first by divine vengeance", they would also encounter "the retribution of our own hand". A world of meaning, and several centuries' worth of history, were contained within that final, fateful phrase.

Attempts to contain the chaos began almost immediately. In the early 4th century the famous heretic Arius sought to separate the Father and the Son. Pinning down Arius' ideas is tricky – hardly any of his writings survive – but he appears to have suggested that the Father was the true God while Jesus, albeit as glorious a figure as might be imagined, was the Father's creation – a subordinate being. They were not of the same substance. This flew in the face of dominant ideas about the equality and one-ness of the three elements of the Trinity and, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, this orthodoxy was enshrined in the council's famous creed. Christ was from the true God and of one substance with the Father. Earlier, Constantine had hoped that quelling debate would suffice: "It becomes us," he had said, "to check loquacity on such topics." But he had quickly realised that the full force of imperially sponsored pronouncements was required. As for Arius, he was banished and, according to a delighted Saint Ambrose, he received appropriate comeuppance when one day he fell headfirst into a lavatory "besmirching those foul lips with which he had denied Christ".



A delegate at the Council of Nicaea assaults the heretic Arius



Pelagius shocked 5th-century Rome with his musings on Original Sin

PELAGIUS
Accurst Pelagius with what falſe pretence
Durst thou excuſe Mans foule Concupiſcence:
Or cry down Sin Originall, or that
The Loue of God did Man predeſtinate.

IMAGE SOURCE: HULTON ARCHIVE / STRINGER / GETTY IMAGES

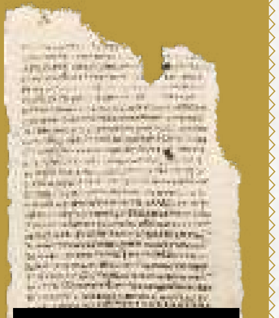
It is important to stress that Arius was not a wild-haired maverick but rather an accomplished theologian. The logic, which he pushed too far, derived from a widespread determination to emphasise Christ's human aspect. This was in many ways understandable in the wake of all those Gnostic and Docetist ideas about Christ not being part of the material world. Moreover, if Christ's sacrifice was to have any meaning then

THE HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE OF THE GNOSTICS

Studying the strange beliefs of the Gnostics was largely a matter of guesswork – until an extraordinary discovery in 1945

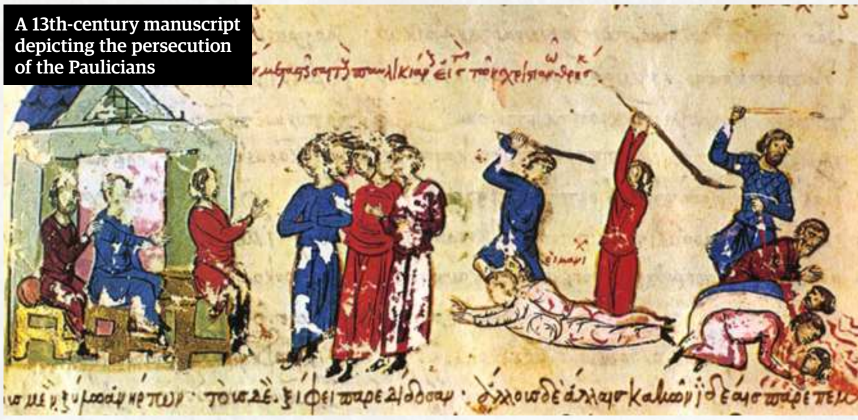
Picture the scene: a peasant and his brothers head off to caves near the town of Nag Hammadi in search of special soil they use to fertilise their crops. They come across a large earthenware vessel, smash it open, and out tumble ancients manuscripts. It turned out that these texts – 52 in all – were genuine artefacts of the heretical Gnostic movement. A few fragments of Gnostic writing had been found before, but this was one of the largest scholarly windfalls in the history of theological study. The texts – often puzzling – included the alternative Gospels of Thomas and Philip, sayings attributed to Christ that never made it into the official New Testament, and musings on creation, salvation, the soul and ritual behaviour. Prior to this discovery we had to rely on hostile accounts of Gnostic beliefs. Suddenly, the Gnostics were able to speak for themselves.

The Nag Hammadi texts only represent one variant of Gnosticism – a movement (if that is the right word) that came up with many different visions of a universe defined by darkness and evil and of routes back to a purer realm of the spirit. One does not have to accept Gnostic ideas (some are, to say the least, quirky) in order to find them fascinating. Perhaps there is another cave somewhere containing a handful of texts that managed to survive the early Church's campaign to burn all the Gnostic writings it could find.



A page from the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas

Present-day Divrigi, once a stronghold of the Paulician heretics



A 13th-century manuscript depicting the persecution of the Paulicians

> “ONE IMPERIAL ENVOY HAD TEN BISHOPS FLOGGED AND IT'S REPORTED ONE THROWN FROM A CLIFF”

surely he must truly have suffered as a man would suffer. The nails had to hurt when they were hammered in.

At the same time, however, figures like Arius set off alarm bells and a theological backlash was all but inevitable. Some thinkers spent much more time stressing Christ's divine attributes, with the Monophysites insisting that Jesus had a single, entirely divine nature. The idea that he had possessed a human soul or consciousness was, they said, preposterous. A figure such as Nestorius, meanwhile, would find himself in choppy waters after arguing in the 5th century that it was possible to identify two entirely distinguishable persons in Christ.

By 451, the endless debates forced the Church to enforce a robust if somewhat confusing solution. At the Council of Chalcedon it was declared that Christ had been both fully human and fully divine and that his two natures had been joined in a metaphysically unique way, joined in what was termed the hypostatic union. Some followers of the faith hailed this move as a timley masterstroke, while many others thought it was a desperate fudge.

CLIFF-LEAPING AND ICON-SMASHING

Establishing a new religion was about more than fine points of theology. How Christians worshipped, how they behaved and who should lead them towards salvation were questions that added to the heretical muddle. A strain of asceticism always managed to surface within Christianity, and as early as the 2nd century the Montanists, with their prophetesses, called for abstinence and radish-based diets and were deemed to be taking their moralising to heretical extremes. Alongside ridicule, they endured exorcisms and the destruction of their shrines.

The Donatists of North Africa, who emerged in the 4th century, met with a similar fate. The memory of persecution under the Romans was still very much alive, and the Donatists were unhappy with the fact that clerics who had succumbed to pressure from the authorities – handing over sacred texts, making sacrifices to pagan gods – were now tending to Christian flocks. Surely it was appropriate to rid the Church of such craven turncoats. North Africa was rapidly turning into a powder keg and Byzantine rulers couldn't tolerate such a threat to social order.

In 345 CE, imperial envoys were despatched to calm the waters, but they only succeeded in provoking riots. In response, one of the envoys, Macarius, had ten Donatist-leaning bishops flogged, and it is reported that one of them, Marculus, was thrown from a cliff top. Other tales tell of Donatists being consigned to a ship weighed down with sand.

The Donatist episode was of pivotal importance. It marked the moment when a culture of internecine violence was embedded in the Christian worldview. Saint Augustine would have preferred a peaceable solution to the Donatists' heretical challenge but, he insisted, they were simply too stubborn and determined. Augustine explained that the Donatists were behaving abominably, “casting lime and vinegar into the eyes of our clergymen" and cutting out the tongues of priests who did not meet their stringent ethical standards.

It is difficult to know whether this was accurate reportage or rhetorical exaggeration, but Augustine's logic was clear enough: when faced with radical dissent, it was perfectly acceptable for the Church to use coercion. This, Augustine argued, was really an act of charity, helping people who could not heal themselves, just as the physician would offer extreme treatment to a roaring madman or the father would chastise his errant son. This would become the prevailing Christian approach to heresy for more than 1,000 years.

BYZANTIUM CONFRONTS HERESY

Heresy in the West ticked along during the next few centuries, and a fair few controversies caused panic. When the British monk Pelagius informed Roman crowds in the 5th century that original sin did not exist and that humanity was perfectible, no few eyebrows were raised. It was, however, in the territories of Rome's successor, the Byzantine Empire, that heresy continued to provoke the most uproar.

Old arguments about the nature of Christ dragged on, and outright military conflict replaced angry disputes in the chambers of Church Councils. The Paulician movement set up its theological stall in 7th-century Armenia, revisiting the idea that Christ had never been a real man. The Paulicians, who spread far and wide through Anatolia, adopted a dualistic position and reputedly even found time to despise the symbol of the cross because it emphasised the human suffering of Jesus: they "heap it down with a thousand insults," as one contemporary explained.

More alarmingly, the Paulicians took up arms, establishing fortified towns in places like Tephrike (Divriği in present-day Turkey) and even aided and abetted Islamic forces when they launched raids against Byzantine territory. By the 9th century, the Paulician general Chrysocheres was attacking towns like Nicaea and Nicomedia, and, in 867, he even managed to capture Ephesus. This was heresy in full military mode.

Thousands of Paulicians would be killed by imperial authorities, and war with the Byzantines in 871–72 ended in the Paulicians' defeat. They were banished to the west to the borders with the Bulgar Empire, but it is likely their curious dualistic beliefs influenced the emergence of the Bogomil movement, which created headaches for the Byzantines from the 10th century onwards.

An equally disruptive movement emerged in the 8th century. Christians had long debated the value of religious images of Jesus, Mary and the saints. Were they useful sources of instruction and devotion or were they little more than idols that had become objects of worship in their own right? The Byzantine Emperor Leo III knew his mind on the issue and would have agreed that there was something offensive about painters attempting to portray the "incomprehensible and uncircumscribable divine nature of Christ".

Byzantium was an icon-loving civilisation, but men like Leo believed the excessive adoration – kissing images, ascribing miracles to them – was intolerable. In 726 he ordered the destruction of icons in the imperial palace, and across the empire religious images were "consigned to the flames". His successor, Constantine V, went further, blinding painters who continued to produce icons.

In 787, the empress Irene lifted the ban on religious images and declared that iconoclasm was a heresy. The respite was short-lived, however, and in 815 Leo V resumed the anti-icon crusade. The stories from this era are deeply disturbing. Some icon-painters were made to spit on their works, but the artist Lazarus, who refused to comply, was tortured until his "flesh melted away along with his blood". He recovered and returned to work, for which transgression red-hot irons were pressed into the palms of his hands.

By 843 the iconoclastic controversy was over and Byzantium returned to its icon-rich patterns of worship. The memory of the turbulent period persisted though. Under Theodora, the empress who brought back the icons, her patriarch could be spotted at public functions, "his lips mutilated by the iron of the iconoclasts" and obliged to "hold his jaw together with bandages".

The many battles over what counted as true belief demonstrated that those who ruled the theological roost were willing to take drastic measures to stamp out opposing ideologies. This was just one aspect of a faith that could soar artistically and inspire the richest devotions, and Christianity certainly held no monopoly when it came to demonising its renegades. But, so far as heresy was concerned, a pattern had been set.

More than a millennium after Christianity emerged as a state-sanctioned faith, the Jesuit Francis Coster described heretics as "the filthy dregs that flowed through the outhouse". Christians had been thinking in such terms for a very long time. Back in the 5th century Vincent of Lerins had made it all sound so very straightforward. The Christian was expected to conform to what had been believed "everywhere, always, and by everyone". Unfortunately, no such precious theological commodity had ever existed.

Emperor Constantine made Christianity a legal faith within the empire and launched many ruthless attacks on heresy

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT
A.D. 274 - 337
PROCLAIMED ROMAN EMPEROR
IN YORK A.D. 306

WAGING WAR

Exactly why did a book preaching peace and love divide people against each other?

Words by Derek Wilson

Once the canon of scripture had been generally accepted in the Western Church it became a 'sacred text'. That is to say, this library of ancient writings was regarded as divinely inspired, authoritative and above contradiction. However, they remained documents written by different people at different times; documents that had been passed down from generation to generation, painstakingly hand-copied over and over again in Greek and Hebrew. So, while the Bible was God-inspired, it was also man-made. God cannot make mistakes. Men can - and do.

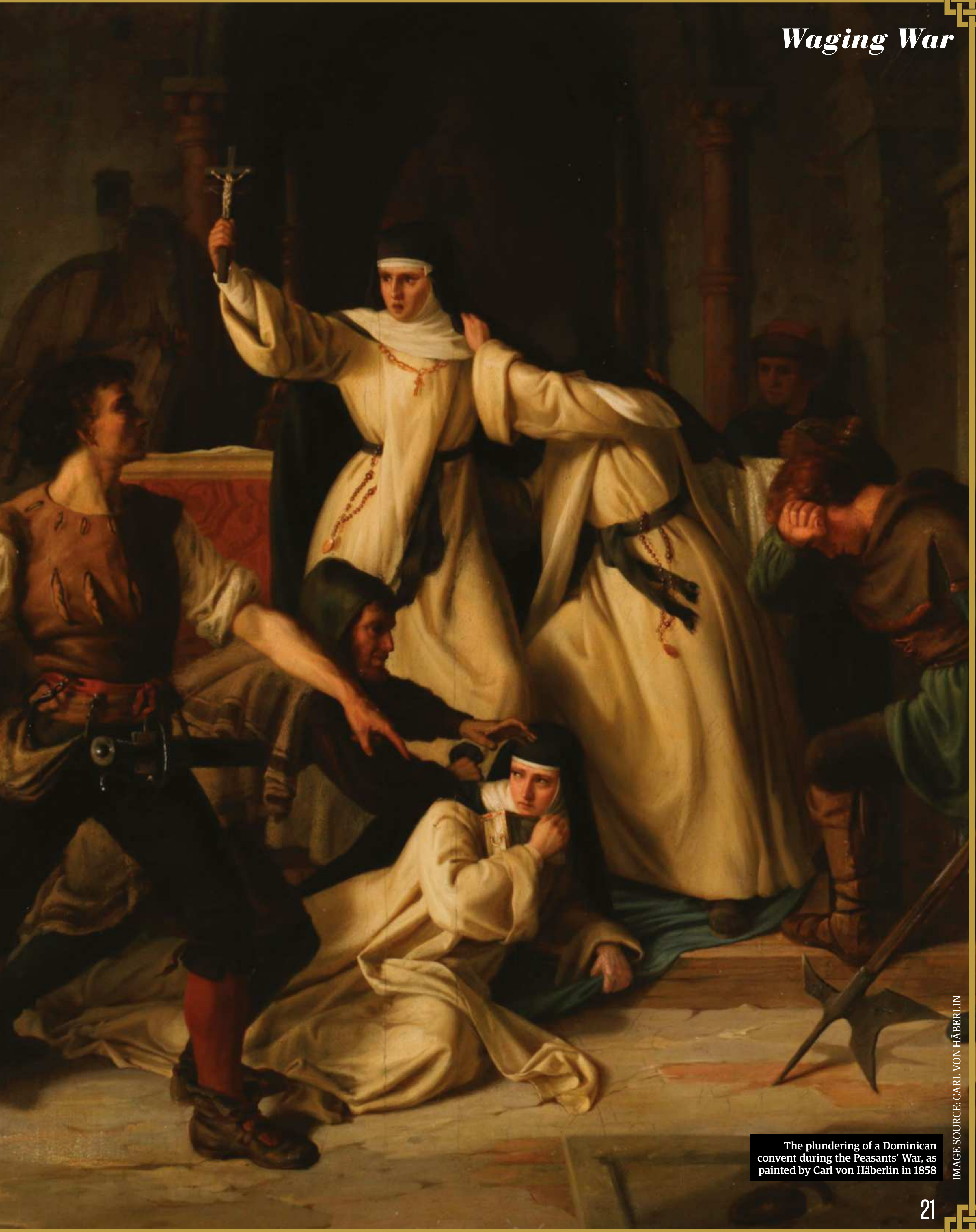
It was the scholar ascetic Jerome (347-420 CE) who, under pressure from Pope Damasus I, produced the complete translation of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate). He worked thoroughly, travelling widely and consulting the most reliable texts he could find. Not only did he seek out, in various monasteries and libraries, the earliest documents available, he also decided which of the many early Jewish and Christian texts used in different churches actually merited inclusion in the 'canon', the official Bible. Henceforth, the Catholic Church endorsed the Vulgate as the infallible text. Throughout the Middle Ages, generations of scholars based their theological studies and their definition of doctrine on this text.

However, one cause for concern was that, from time to time, early and/or better manuscripts came to light that varied in minor ways from Jerome's version. This became a serious issue after the Muslim conquest of the eastern Christian empire and the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Scholars fleeing from the enemy arrived in the West, bringing with them precious and rare manuscripts never seen in Europe before. This made a double impact on the scholarly world: it provided more texts for comparison with the Vulgate, and it inspired a more detailed study of the ancient languages in which the Bible was written. By this time the authority of the papacy had become inseparably bound up with the authority of the Vulgate. Anyone touting different interpretations was denounced as a heretic.

DEALING WITH DEVIANTS

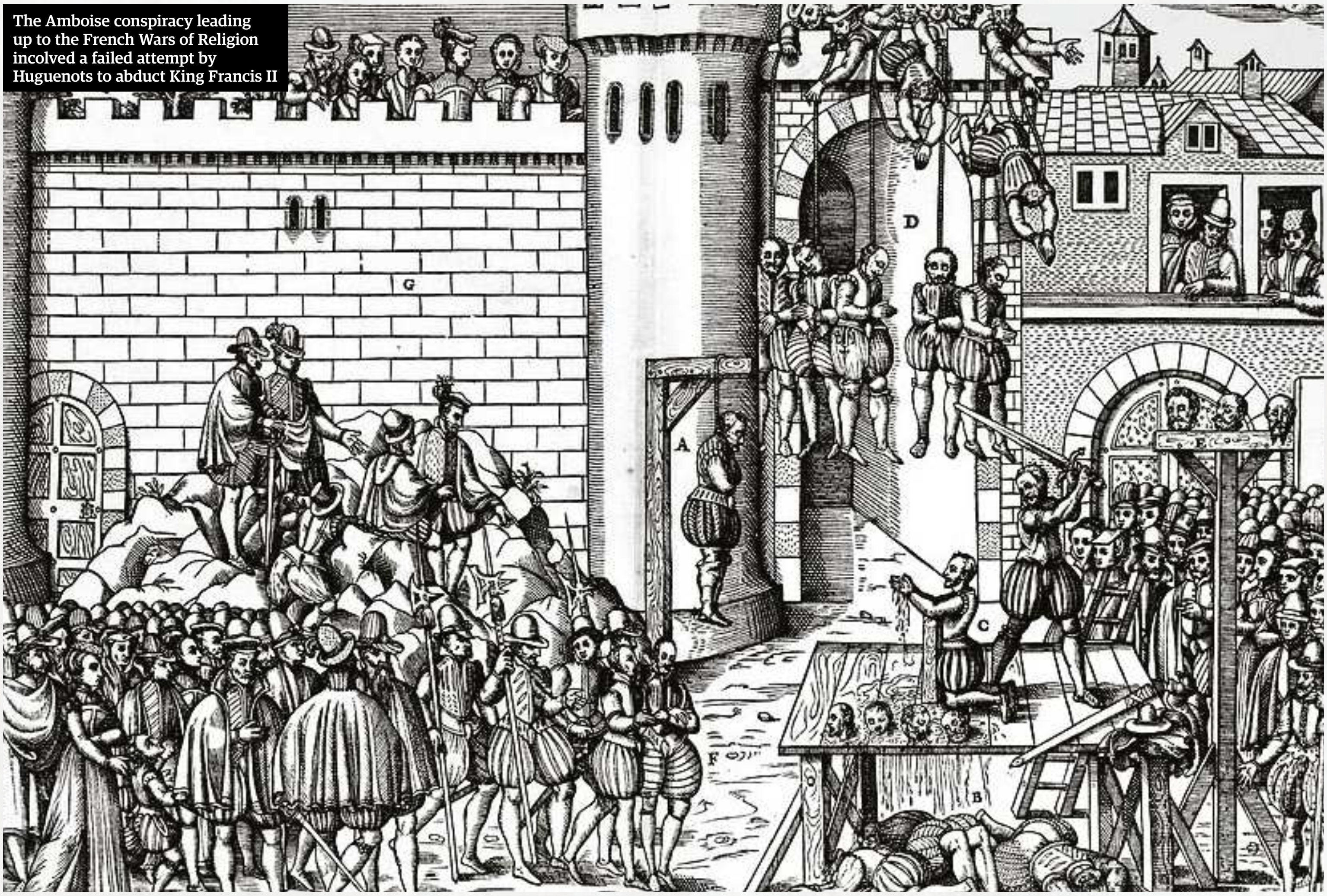
The mention of the word 'heresy' obliges us to take a few steps backwards in time. The Church has always had heretics. The term itself comes from a Greek word meaning 'choice'. Heretics were people who had chosen, for their own reasons, to believe teachings at variance with what the authorities in Rome decreed. Those authorities had various ways of dealing with variants. They could impose acts of penance. They could isolate offenders in monasteries to prevent

> "ANYONE TOUTING DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS WAS DENOUNCED AS A HERETIC"



The plundering of a Dominican convent during the Peasants' War, as painted by Carl von Häberlin in 1858

IMAGE SOURCE: CARL VON HÄBERLIN



The Amboise conspiracy leading up to the French Wars of Religion incolved a failed attempt by Huguenots to abduct King Francis II

IMAGE SOURCE: JEAN PERRISSIN

“IN EXTREME CASES, THEY CALLED KINGS AND THEIR SUBJECTS TO WAGE WAR AND EXTERMINATE THOSE UNDERMINING CHRISTIAN SOCIETY”

the spread of their ideas. They could hand over those convicted in church courts to the secular authorities to be imprisoned or executed. In extreme cases, when heretical movements had got out of hand, they called kings and their subjects to wage war and exterminate those undermining Christian society.

There were various reasons why religious enthusiasts opposed the Church hierarchy. Often heresy began with rejection of a church leadership that had become corrupt. Rebels complained that popes, bishops and even parish priests were more interested in power and wealth than in caring for the spiritual needs of the people. The critics saw themselves as reformers, preaching a gospel of simplicity and humility. This led some heretic groups to reject basic Christian doctrine. For example, the Cathars of northern Italy and southern France evolved a dualistic theology in which the God of the Old Testament was evil and the God of the New Testament was good. The pope ordered a crusade against the Cathars and conflict existed from the mid 12th to the early 14th century. The more far-reaching Waldensian heresy, meanwhile, made no assault on basic doctrine but concentrated on church practices that enhanced the powers of the priesthood, such as confession and transubstantiation (the belief that the celebrant at mass could actually change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ).

BIBLE VS CHURCH MOVEMENTS

However, these and other unorthodox movements did involve comparing and contrasting official doctrine and practice with the teaching of the Bible. For centuries the Catholic hierarchy relied upon the educational gap between clergy and laity. Few lay people could read Latin, the language of scholars and church officials, and not many were literate in their own vernacular languages. But the times were changing - 15th-century heretical movements were claiming biblical support for their challenge of Catholic leadership and they were sponsoring unauthorised translations.

In centres as far apart as Oxford and Prague, two Bible-based protest movements flagged up what would become a ‘Bible versus Church’ movement. The 14th-century Oxford professor John Wycliffe (1330-84) launched a protest against the moral failings and political power of the clergy. As part of his campaign, he urged all literate English people to study the Bible for themselves so that they could see clearly the gap that had opened up between how their priests behaved and what the Christian foundation document actually said. To enable them to do this, he began to write an English translation of the Vulgate. The work was continued after his death by his followers, dubbed ‘Lollards’ by their enemies. This underground movement continued throughout the 15th century and well into the 1500s.

English church leaders responded by banning all unauthorised translations and parliament passed one of the most draconian laws ever to appear on the statute book in De Heretico Comburendo, which labelled Lollardy as seditious and mandated death by burning for all convicted Lollards.

In Prague, capital of Bohemia, Jan Huss (1369-1415), rector of the university, took up Wycliffe's teaching and campaigned for the use of the Czech language for the Bible and all church services. Hus was summoned to a church council in Constance in 1415 to discuss his views, under the promise of a safe conduct. Once there, he was charged with heresy and burned at the stake, an event that sparked the Hussite Wars of 1419-34. Although the Hussites were split into rival camps by the conflict, their basic beliefs spread rapidly through Bohemia and neighbouring lands over the next two centuries.

STUDYING THE SACRED TEXT

By the early 16th century, it was not only religious radicals who were proclaiming a 'back to the Bible' message - scholars across Europe were bringing open minds to the study of the sacred text. The Renaissance encouraged the growing interest in the study of Greek and Hebrew.

In 1516, the leading philosopher of the age, Desiderius Erasmus, grasped the nettle of the Vulgate, with his Novum Instrumentum presenting the Greek New Testament according to the best available texts, together with a new Latin translation. What was shocking about this to traditionalists was the suggestion that St Jerome's text could be improved on - that it contained errors. Erasmus didn't shrink from pointing out what some of those errors were. For example, the Greek word 'metanoeite' had been rendered into Latin as poenitentiam agite, 'do penance'. This meant 'perform the rituals prescribed by the Church for obtaining restitution'. Erasmus pointed out that the sense of the Greek was 'repent', experience an inner change - something much more personal and not requiring priestly intermediaries.

Erasmus went even further; he called for vernacular translations of scripture and declared, quite openly,

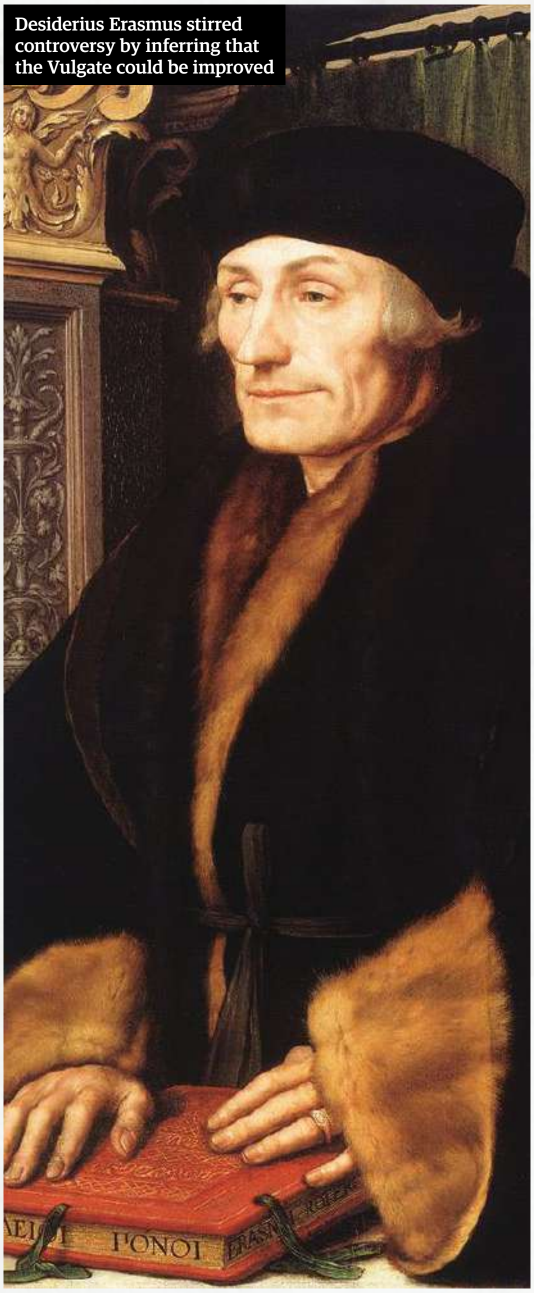

Desiderius Erasmus stirred controversy by inferring that the Vulgate could be improved

IMAGE SOURCE: HANS HOLBEIN

A contemporary illustration depicting the Peasants' War

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES

A DISSENTING MANIFESTO

In 1395, the Wycliffites, or Lollards, a disparate movement of English biblicists, published, by means of placards nailed to church doors, their complaints about the religious establishment. Their *Twelve Conclusions* stated:

1 The Church has become too involved in worldly politics.

2 Priestly ordination has no biblical warrant.

3 Clerical celibacy encourages the sin of sodomy.

4 The doctrine of transubstantiation encourages the worship of material objects.

5 Clerical exorcism and hallowing is a form of witchcraft.

6 High-ranking churchmen should not also be senior officers of state.

7 Specific prayers for dead individuals discriminate against the rest of the blessed departed and demanding payment for such prayers amounts to bribery and corruption.

8 Pilgrimages and veneration of relics are both ineffectual and idolatrous.

9 Priestly confession and absolution usurp the authority held by God alone.

10 Because Christians are called to demonstrate love and forgiveness they should not engage in warfare. Wars waged with religious justification (ie Crusades) are especially blasphemous.

11 Vows of female celibacy encourage covert sexual activity and abortion.

12 Too much attention is given to expressing religious devotion through the creation of beautiful objects instead of practising godliness.

> "OFTEN HERESY BEGAN WITH REJECTION OF A CHURCH LEADERSHIP"

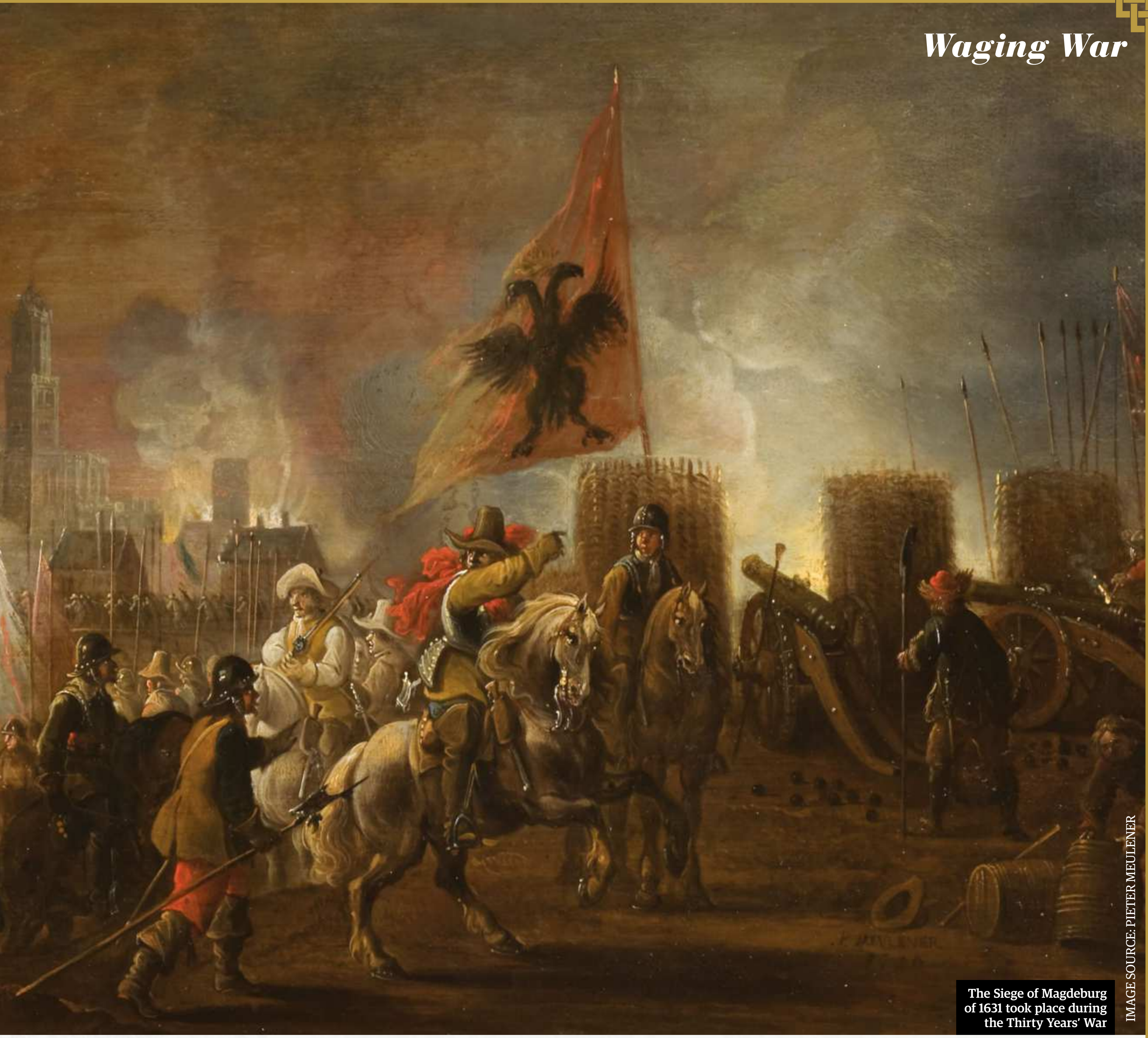
"THE WORD OF GOD IN THE COMMON TONGUE WAS AN INTELLECTUAL INTOXICANT"

that he believed the sacred text should be available for every literate man or women to read. Within a decade, scholars in various countries were turning Erasmus' dream into reality by producing Bibles that educated people in Germany, England, France and elsewhere could read for themselves. This was the biggest single factor that changed the religious and social life of the continent. It released a new kind of individualism: if ordinary men and women were able to establish their own relationship with God simply by reading his written word, what might they discover therein about the nature of priesthood, kingship and law? To take just one example, Jesus taught his followers not to swear oaths to buttress the truth of what they said, "Just say 'yes' or 'no', he commented – 'anything else you say comes from the Evil One'" (Matthew 5:33-7). But in 16th-century Europe, all contractual relationships were based on the swearing of oaths. To refuse to reinforce a declaration of interest by invoking the name of God or specific saints was to opt out of society. Religious radicals who took this stance ran the risk of being tried for sedition.

SCRIPTURE'S SECRETS

The word of God in the common tongue was an intellectual intoxicant. It appeared at a time when the new invention of movable type printing was making books available to a growing audience. Every major development in human communication – newspapers, telephone, radio, internet – is an exciting event with incalculable consequences, and so it was with printed books. They gave an explosive impetus to education. European societies rapidly became more literate, and the book above all others that people wanted to read for themselves was the Bible. They wanted to know what the text said and what it meant. Interpretation was the key that unlocked scripture's secrets. The library of history, poetry, philosophy, biography, prophecy and law was a complex collection that needed to be explained to people without theological training. If priests weren't trusted to do this, who was?

The answer was a new breed of Protestant preachers, and the first was Martin Luther (1483-1546). This Saxon monk's challenge to papal authority stemmed from his own anguished spiritual history. That drove him back to the study of the Greek and Hebrew originals and



The Siege of Magdeburg of 1631 took place during the Thirty Years' War

IMAGE SOURCE: PIETER MEULENER

this, in turn, brought him to an understanding of salvation depending, not on the observance of religious rituals, but on personal response, by faith, to the initiative taken by a loving God in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this he was at one with Erasmus, but he went on in his famous *95 Theses* to draw conclusions that, if true, undermined the authority of the papacy.

Luther made his own German translation of the Bible (New Testament 1522, Old Testament 1534). The result was not only a clear exposition but a classic of German literature. It contained more than the plain text; it elaborated on the original in explanatory notes that emphasised the core evangelical (ie gospel-based) doctrines that Luther understood as the central thread of the entire biblical narrative.

FUEL TO THE FIRE

It would be wrong to say that the Bible caused the social upheaval and warfare that devastated Europe for the next 150 years - what it did do was act as a stimulant for conflicts that already existed. The Holy Roman Empire was a patchwork of principalities and free cities, each with its own agenda in relation to imperial and papal activities within its territory. Some remained loyal to the papacy, while others embraced Lutheranism. Luther had been condemned at the Diet of Worms in 1521 and in distant Rome, the pope clamoured for him and his followers to be exterminated. North of the Alps, the situation wasn't that simple.

"Because now the Common Man everywhere thirsts after God's Word and the Gospel, which… have recently spread much more widely than before… If we accept, approve or allow to be enforced even the slightest barrier to the Gospel's spread, the honourable, free and Imperial cities… could not only not enforce such a law, but they would doubtless provoke widespread disturbances, rebellion, murder, bloodshed, yes, total ruin and every sort of evil…"

That was the official response from one of the imperial cities. The 'Common Man' was nursing numerous grievances against his secular and religious overlords. Rebellion was in the air and the 'freedom' Luther seemed to be teaching was grasped by popular leaders as providing divine sanction for the forcible overthrow of the religious and secular hierarchies oppressing the people.

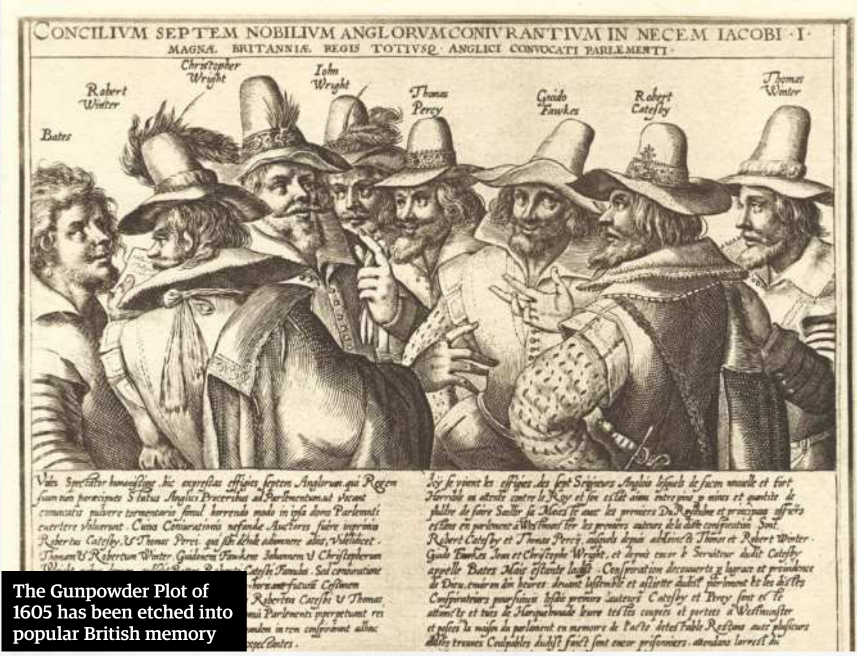
In 1524-25, violence broke out in several parts of central Germany. The disorganised and poorly

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Breaking from Catholicism

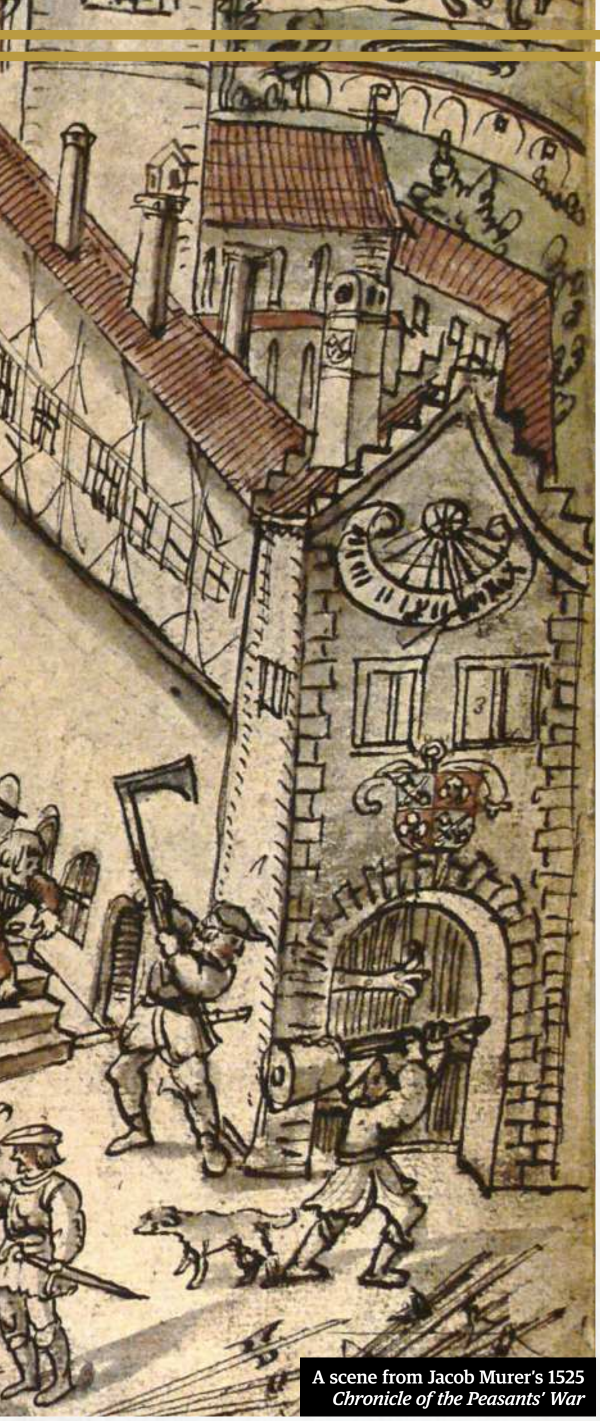
For centuries, individuals and breakaway groups had protested about the teachings and practices of the Western Church, but dissent came to a head in the 1520s. At the Diet of Worms in 1521, the teachings of Martin Luther were outlawed in the Holy Roman Empire, but they spread throughout many states of the Empire as princes and leaders of free cities accepted 'evangelical' teaching (ie beliefs based on study of the Bible, rather than doctrines of the Catholic Church).

To prevent divisions within the empire - and particularly to maintain unity in the face of the Muslim threat from the East - the emperor was inclined to permit a measure of toleration but Catholic reactionaries exerted mounting pressure. In 1529, a meeting of the imperial diet was summoned at Speyer to co-ordinate action against the Turkish advance towards Hungary. The Catholic majority now demanded a tougher religious line, specifically rejecting the right of state rulers to decide the religion to be pursued in their territories. Against this, six evangelical princes and the evangelical leaders of 14 cities signed a document against being forced to endorse teaching dictated by Rome. "In matters which concern God's honour and salvation and the eternal life of our souls," they insisted, "everyone must stand and give account before God for himself." The document was called a 'Protestation'. A new word had been added to all the languages of Europe.


CONCILIVM SEPTEM NOBILIVM ANGLORVM CONIVRANTIVM IN NECEM IACOBI · I ·
MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ REGIS TOTIVSQ ANGLICI CONVOCATI PARLEMENTI ·
Bates
Robert Winter
Christopher Wright
Iohn Wright
Thomas Percy
Guido Fawkes
Robert Catesby
Thomas Winter

The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 has been etched into popular British memory

IMAGE SOURCE: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY



A scene from Jacob Murer's 1525 *Chronicle of the Peasants' War*

IMAGE SOURCE: JACOB MURER

armed working people were easily overwhelmed by troops sent against them by their overlords (Luther denounced the rebels and urged their suppression) but the cost of the Peasants' War was horrendous. At least 100,000 simple people were slaughtered. It was one of the worst bloodbaths in European history. More than that, it gave rise to a number of radical sects (who are sometimes lumped together as 'Anabaptists') whose teaching was based on wild apocalypticism and extremist interpretation of Bible passages.

INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

It was not only trouble-making revolutionaries who deviated from Luther's understanding of the Bible. Because the reformers who would come to be called 'Protestants' believed in the personal revelation given by God to all who sincerely studied his word, they recognised no unifying human authority: there was no 'Protestant pope'. Various preachers and pastors emerged in different places and, though they agreed on the basics of Protestant theology, there were sufficient points of difference to prevent them uniting. It was all a matter of 'interpretation, interpretation, interpretation'. In 1529, a meeting of leading Protestant theologians was called at Marburg in the principality of Hesse. They reached agreement on 14 out of 15 points of doctrine – the last point dealt with the Communion service, or Lord's Supper. Luther insisted on taking a literal meaning of Jesus' words: "This is my body; this is my blood." He believed that a physical change took place in the elements. In contrast, the other theologians opted for some kind of symbolic meaning to the words.

The leading protestant thinker of the next generation was John Calvin (1509-64), a French scholar who was forced to flee persecution and settled in Geneva. There he published a comprehensive manual of Protestant doctrine that was an answer to the *Summa Theologiae* of the 13th-century scholar Thomas Aquinas (1225-74). Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was a systematic exposition of biblical teaching, but, again, it didn't please all evangelical Christians. Some, for example, couldn't accept Calvin's belief in double predestination, the doctrine that God pre-ordained some people to be saved and others to be damned.

By the second half of the century, Calvinism had become a major force in France (where the Protestants were called Huguenots) and the Low Countries. The kings of France and Spain (which owned the southern Netherlands), egged on by the pope, used force to bring the 'heretics' to heel. The French Wars of Religion lasted from 1562 to 1598, while the Dutch War of Independence extended from 1568 to 1648.

"THE KINGS OF FRANCE AND SPAIN USED FORCE TO BRING THE 'HERETICS' TO HEEL"

GUNPOWDER, TREASON AND PLOT

Even countries that avoided major war on their own soil could not entirely escape violent conflict over religion. England opted for its own brand of Calvinism in the reign of Edward VI (1547-53), but successive popes did their utmost to bring the nation back into the Catholic fold. They sponsored plots and backed the Spanish king, Philip II, to invade the country in 1558. As late as 1605, it was passionate devotion to papal authority that fuelled the most notorious mass assassination attempt in English history.

"Remember, remember the fifth of November, gunpowder, treason and plot" – so ran the rhyme English children were soon chanting as every autumn they celebrated the failure of a scheme to blow up King James I and most of the nation's political leaders. But while we recall such spectacular events as the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the failure of the Gunpowder Plot, we should not forget the numerous little wars throughout the 16th century unsuccessfully waged in Ireland by an English government determined to Protestantise Catholic Ireland.

Charles I at his trial in 1649. He used words from Holy Scripture to justify his autocratic position

IMAGE SOURCE: EDWARD BOWER

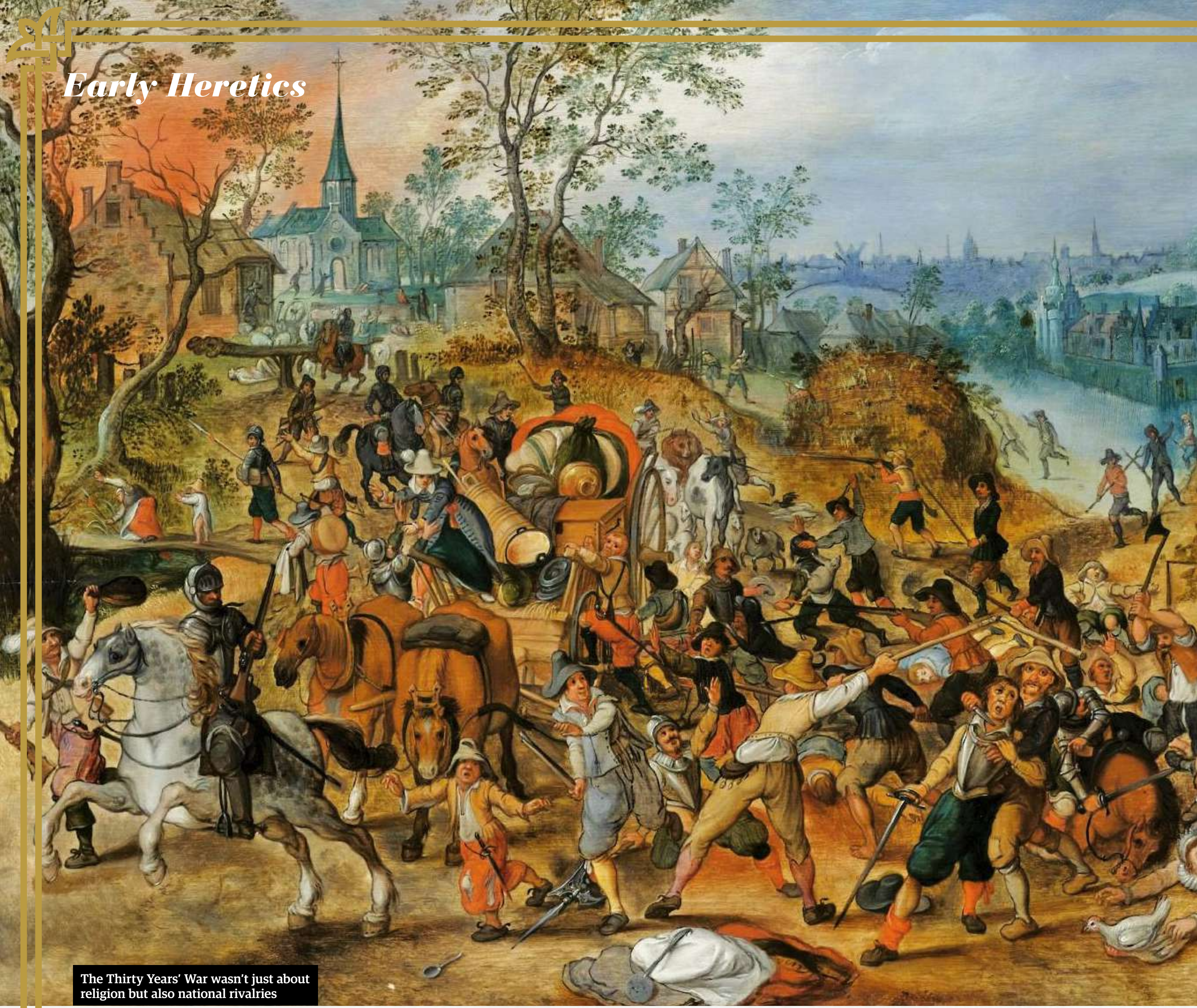
Nor should we lose sight of the fact that it was vernacular Bibles that kept alive the faith of individuals and inspired many to challenge the rival authority of the pope in Rome. By the end of the 16th century, readers from Scotland to Hungary, France to Poland, Switzerland to Norway were able to study the sacred text in their own languages. And in 1610, English Catholic scholars working in exile in Rheims published a papacy-approved Bible for the use of their missionaries working in England. Ruefully, they confessed in their preface:

"We do not publish upon erroneous opinion of necessity, that the holy Scriptures should always be in our mother tongue, or that they ought, or were ordained by God, to be read indifferently of all… but upon special consideration of the present time, state and condition of our country, unto which divers things are either necessary, or profitable and medicinal now, that otherwise in the peace of the church were neither much requisite, nor perchance wholly tolerable."

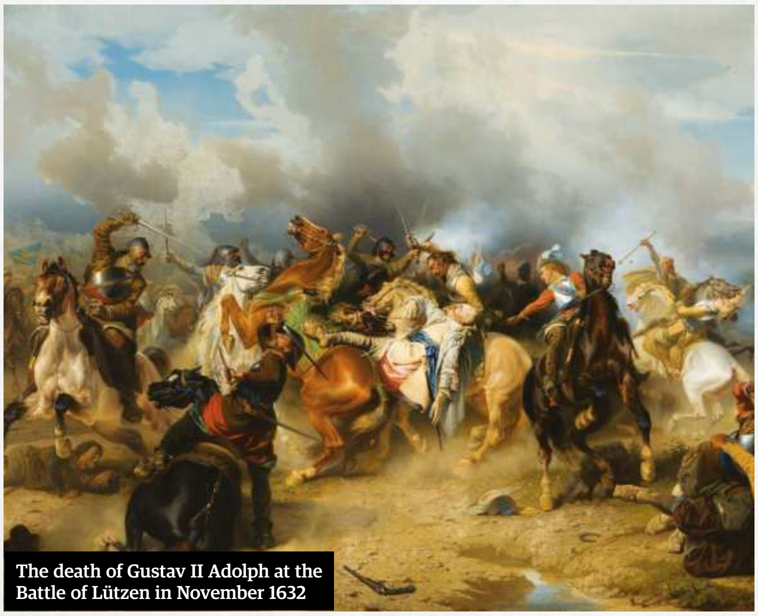
RELIGION AS AN EXCUSE

With Europe now divided into Catholic and Protestant camps, it was unlikely that further military conflict could be avoided, but the continent was about to suffer the worst conflict in its history. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48) was not just about religion; it was about national rivalries, the future of the Holy Roman Empire, the ambitions of mercenary military leaders and the aspirations of small states for self-determination. But because all the peoples involved subscribed to one or other of the various brands of Christianity that had become established, participants claimed religious justification for their activities.

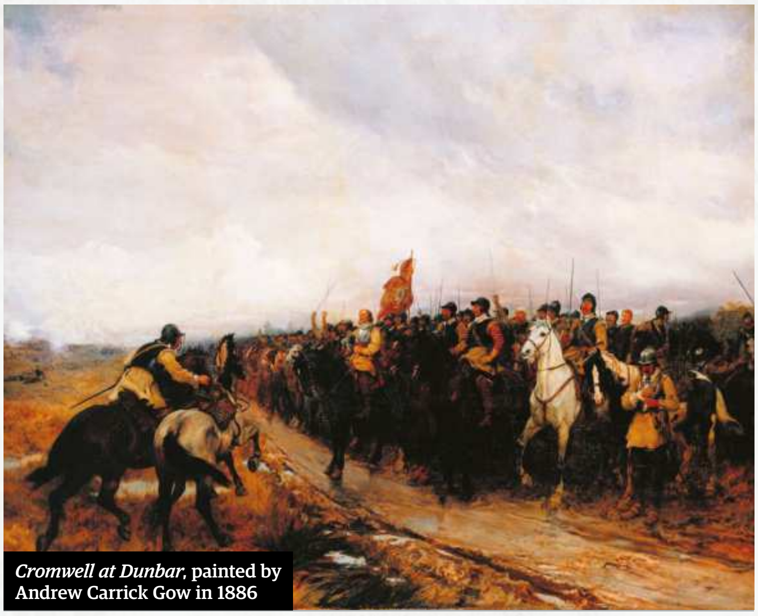
The papacy was desperate to regain the loyalty of Protestant states in northern Europe. The Holy Roman emperor used Catholicism to impose unity on his crumbling domain. Leading Protestant states went to the aid of weaker Protestant nations. Individuals from several countries took



The Thirty Years' War wasn't just about religion but also national rivalries



The death of Gustav II Adolph at the Battle of Lützen in November 1632



Cromwell at Dunbar, painted by Andrew Carrick Gow in 1886

IMAGE SOURCE: CARL WAHLBOM

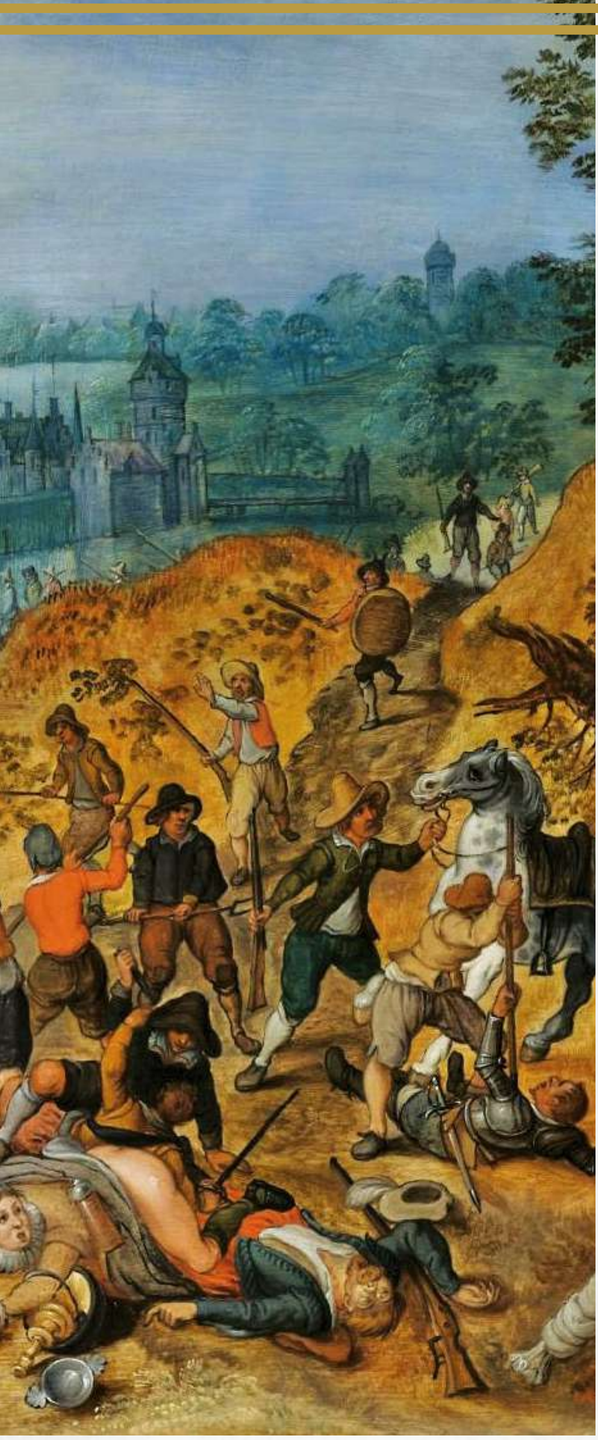
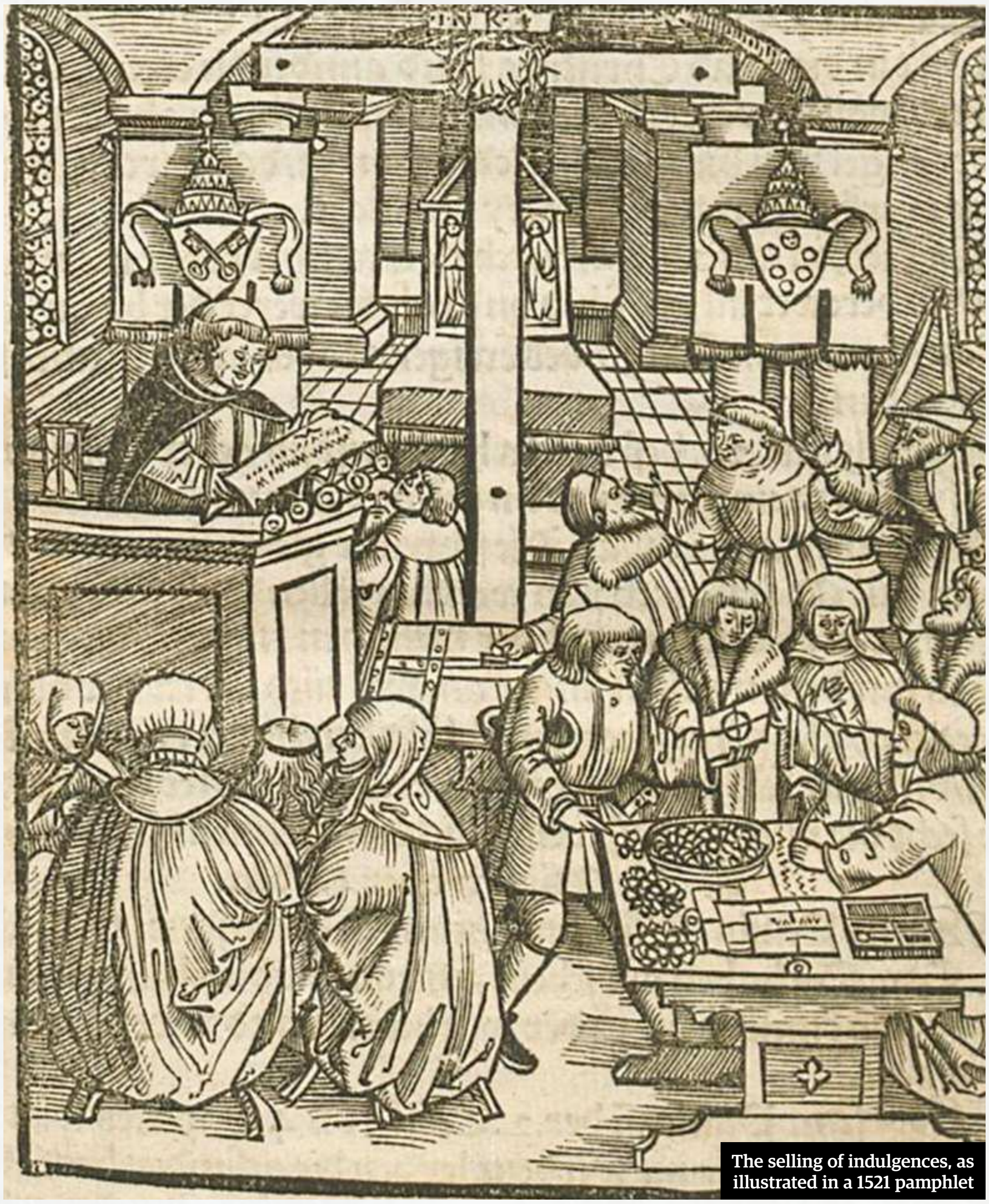


IMAGE SOURCE: SEBASTIAEN VRANCX



The selling of indulgences, as illustrated in a 1521 pamphlet

up arms in what they believed was a holy cause. Without acknowledging the strength of religious feeling among the combatants, it is impossible to understand the ferocity of the war or the appalling atrocities committed on both sides. This was Europe's last – and worst – religious war.

It began when the intensely pious Emperor Ferdinand II tried to end Hussite political influence in Bohemia. The councillors in Prague showed their contempt by throwing the imperial envoys from a high window in the town hall (the Defenestration of Prague). This led to a brief war and the crushing of the Bohemian nationalists at the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620. Ferdinand followed this up with severe reprisals, including an order that all non-Catholics were to convert on pain of death. Over the next few years, Ferdinand launched a Catholic crusade aimed at recovering territories lost to Lutheran and Catholic regimes over the previous century. Aided by Spain and employing well-trained mercenary armies, he met with remarkable success. But his triumph was his undoing.

Alarmed by the Catholic threat, Protestant states – imperial principalities, the Dutch Republic and the Scandinavian nations – took a stance and lined up against the Catholic megalith. France, wary of the growing power of its old rivals, Spain and the empire, actually came in on the Protestant side and nations like England and Scotland, and although not formally engaged in the war, sent volunteer armies to aid their co-religionists nonetheless.

The appearance of a brilliant military leader in Sweden proved to be a game changer. King Gustavus Adolphus (who was financially backed by France) joined the war in 1630. In a series of campaigns over the next four years, the Swedish-led coalition managed to wipe out many of the imperial gains, even though Gustavus Adolphus met his death at the Battle of Lützen in 1632. The remaining years of the war resolved into a bruising dynastic and territorial contest between the French and the Habsburg rulers of Spain and the empire. By the time all the contenders had fought themselves into a state of complete exhaustion, there were preachers on both sides so appalled by the violence, carnage and devastation that they believed they were witnessing Armageddon, prophesied in the Bible as the final battle between the forces of heaven and hell. Analysis by CV Wedgwood, the historian of the war, provides macabre details that help to explain this belief:

"At Frankfurt-on-the-Oder pestilence bred of the rotting bodies of the dead had overwhelmed the survivors. At Stettin and Spandau the Swedes had left the plague, in the towns of Durlach and Lorch, at Würzburg and in the whole province of Württemberg; at Bamberg the bodies lay unburied in the streets, and on both banks of the Rhine there was famine… The harvest of 1632 promised well, but in Bavaria and Swabia the

REFORMATION MORPHS INTO REVOLUTION

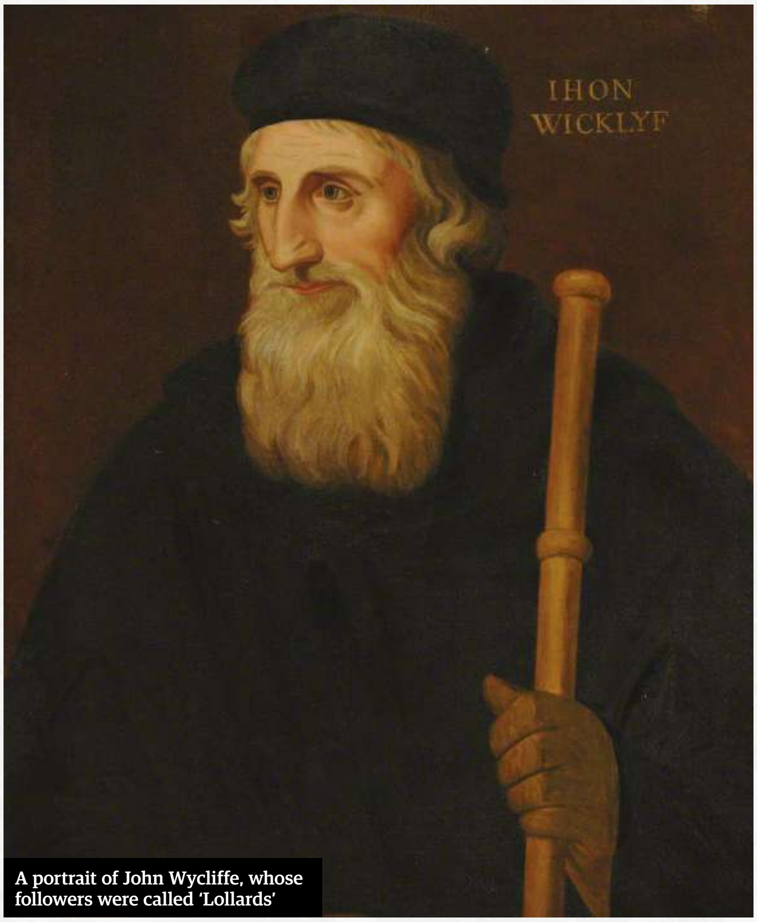
Spreading the word of change

The sad career of Thomas Müntzer (c.1489-1525) illustrates the confused and sometimes violent feelings just waiting to leap out like a jack-in-the-box when theologians like Luther turned the key. He was a mystic, musician and preacher who trilled to the reformer's message. Driven by Lutheran teaching to turn away from Catholic dogma to the Bible, he drifted into interpretations of the text that were highly individualistic; he believed that Christians should be led by the Spirit of God, rather than the word of God, that the end of the world was at hand, and that true believers were to prepare the way for the final showdown between good and evil. That meant they should turn against the corrupt Church and state with such activities as destroying religious images and refusing to pay taxes.

This message appeared to give divine sanction to social revolution and appealed to those at the bottom of the social scale who felt themselves downtrodden and ill-used. Müntzer thus became one of the zealous standard bearers of the Peasants' War (1524-25), going on a preaching tour throughout southwest Germany before returning to Mühlhausen where he formed an armed band to challenge the superior forces of the ruling class. Eventually his rebel rabble met up with their 'worldly' enemy at Frankenhausen on 11 May 1525. It was no contest. Six thousand of Müntzer's men were killed in a matter of minutes. The leader fled, and was captured, tortured and executed.

A statue of Müntzer stands in Mühlhausen

IMAGE SOURCE: MICHAEL SANDER



A portrait of John Wycliffe, whose followers were called 'Lollards'

IMAGE SOURCE: BALLIOL COLLEGE

passing troops trampled it down; in Bavaria there was neither corn left to grind nor seed to sow for the year to come; plague and famine wiped out whole villages, mad dogs attacked their masters, and the authorities posted men with guns to shoot down the raving victims before they could contaminate their fellows; hungry wolves abandoned the woods and mountains to roam through the deserted hamlets, devouring the dying and the dead."

CLASH OF AUTHORITY

So, was all this misery and violence the fault of the Bible? Or, to put the question another way, how can the obscenities of 1618-48 be squared with the gospel of peace and love?

Clearly, national rivalries, personal ambitions and the lure of military plunder played major roles in the Thirty Years' War. It is also true that religion was used as a banner by various parties to rally military, political and diplomatic support. Then again, whatever motives participants claimed justified them taking part were soon lost sight of once rival commanders had 'let slip the dogs of war'. A hungry army, marching its way through villages and homelands, had very little interest in the religious beliefs of the farmers and peasants who stood between them and their next meal.

However, in forming our historical judgements on their actions, we shouldn't forget that the separation of Church and state that we take for granted was still a couple of hundred years down the road in 1648. The principle cuius regio eius religio (the sovereign's religion is the religion of the state) was accepted in most countries. No nation could feel secure if its religious life was a free-for-all; if its citizens were able to believe whatever they wanted to believe.

ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

We can see the essential issues dividing royal absolutism and religious freedom in the conflict taking place in Britain and Ireland at the same time as the later stages of the Thirty Years' War. The arguments for and against toleration lay at the heart of the English Civil War (1642-51).

Charles I and Oliver Cromwell both took their political stand on the Bible. Charles clashed with parliament over issues in which the civil and religious rights of the people were intertwined. Cromwell, who emerged as the leader of parliament and the army, opposed the king on principles that were similarly impossible to disentangle. When, in January 1649, the king was brought to the scaffold to be executed for crimes against the people, he said in his address to the audience, "Liberty and freedom [of the people] consists not [in] having a share in government... a subject and a sovereign are clear different things".

Four years later, Cromwell, now uncrowned head of state, arbitrarily dismissed parliament with these words: "perceiving the spirit of God so strong upon me, I would not consult flesh and blood". Both men were absolutists who sought their ultimate authority in scripture.

Charles believed, as his predecessors believed, that the sovereign was God's appointed viceregent in Church as well as state. In Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans he found these words: "There is no power but of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (13:1-2 King James Version). Cromwell found in that same epistle another source of authority: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (8:9 King James Version). Both men claimed an authority

"NO NATION COULD FEEL SECURE IF ITS RELIGIOUS LIFE WAS A FREE-FOR-ALL; IF ITS CITIZENS WERE ABLE TO BELIEVE WHATEVER THEY WANTED TO BELIEVE" that could not be challenged - one by virtue of his consecration; the other based upon the 'inner voice' of divine guidance.

It was, indeed, central to the teaching of the New Testament that Christians would be directly guided by the Holy Spirit and that they would be able to discern people whose words and deeds showed them to be anti-Christian. Preachers and philosophers had argued for decades whether the word of God sanctioned Christians to oppose tyranny or whether they should patiently suffer injustice - if necessary by facing death - and they would continue to do so. In the short term, the royalist cause prevailed; the monarchy was restored in 1660. But the seeds of parliamentary democracy had been sown by the constitutional conflict of the 17th century.

NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Something else that emerged briefly in England in this period was a patchwork of miscellaneous religious groups. The parliamentary victory established the right of people to worship as they wished. Hitherto the king's subjects had been obliged to worship according to the rites of the Church of England. Once this restriction was removed, people formed churches, each based on its own interpretation of the Bible.

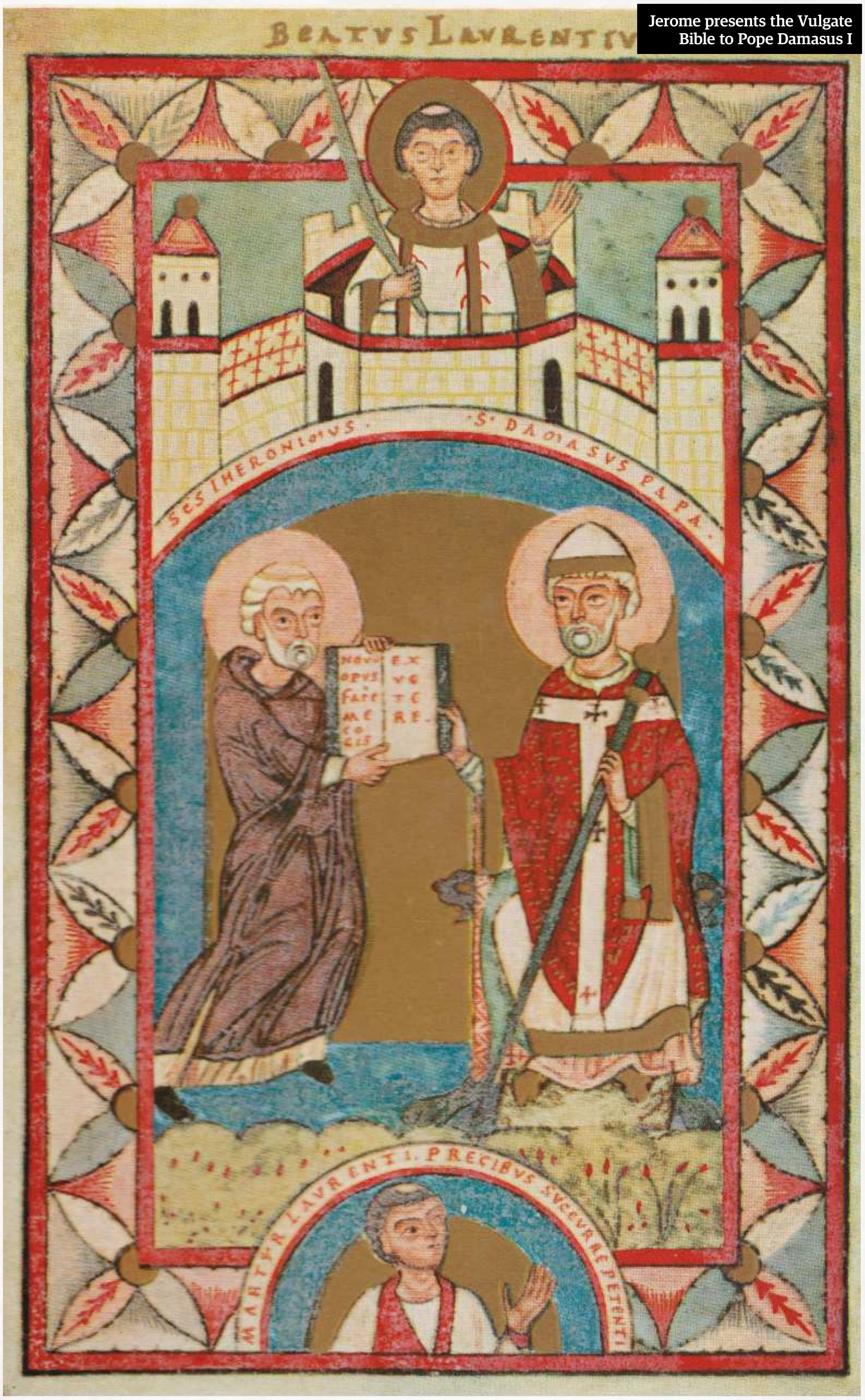
Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, Seekers and Muggletonians were just some of the non-conformist assemblies that sprang briefly to life once the rights of Englishmen to respond to the Bible message as they understood it was established. They were outlawed by the restoration of the monarchy and people dissenting from the official Church suffered discrimination for more than a century.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that the constant divisions among Bible-believing Christians would, long ago, have resulted in the consigning of this book to oblivion. The fact is that centuries of wars, persecutions and theological conflict have not destroyed the credibility of this unique book. On the contrary, throughout all the turmoil of human history worldwide, the Bible was and still is the most read book in the world.

A 1517 Nuremberg printing of Martin Luther's *95 Theses*

IMAGE SOURCE: MARTIN LUTHER

> "THE PARLIAMENTARY VICTORY ESTABLISHED THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO WORSHIP AS THEY WISHED"



Jerome presents the Vulgate Bible to Pope Damasus I

BEATVS LAVRENTIV
SCS IHERONIMUS
S DAMASUS PAPA
NOVU OPUS FACERE ME COGIS
EX VETERE
MARTYR LAURENTI PRECIBUS SUCCURRE PETENTI

THE SPANISH RECONQUISTA

Christianity and Islam joined battle in Medieval Spain, trading accusations of heresy and ungodliness. The conflict helped to set the tone of European history for centuries to come

Words by Jon Wright

The Alhambra in Granada, the last Muslim region to fall

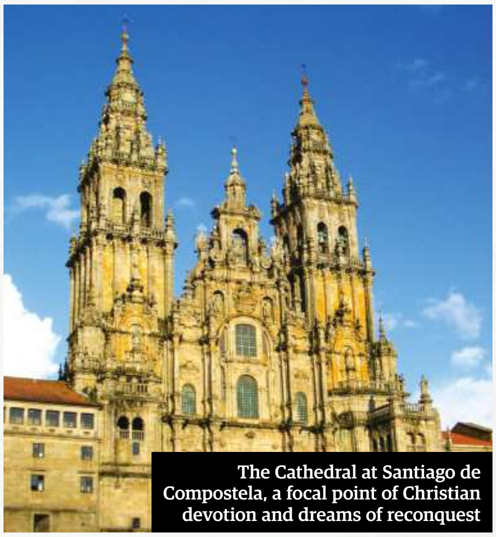
Islam's expansion from the 7th century onwards must be counted as one of the most prodigious achievements of the entire early Medieval era. In this context, a quick hop, skip and jump across the western Mediterranean, from North Africa to the Iberian peninsula, presumably seemed to be a relatively modest manoeuvre, but it would have lasting consequences for Spain and the future of Christian-Muslim relations.

In 711, Berber and Arab troops, loyal to the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus, launched an invasion. It was led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, governor of Tangier. Astonishingly rapid progress was made – a process facilitated by divisions within the ranks of the ruling power, the Visigoths. Major cities were seized while others opted to capitulate: Córdoba, Zaragoza, Toledo and Seville among them.

By 720, Islamic control of Iberia was almost complete and the period of Visigothic dominance had come to an end. The land that came to be known as al-Andalus was born. Needless to say, contemporary Christians were not best pleased. The shock was overwhelming and, as one 8th-century chronicler asked, "Who can count such terrible disasters? Even if every limb were transformed into a tongue, it would be beyond human capability to describe the ruin of Spain." He was unable to conceive that the invasion would produce one of the richest, if always fraught, cultures in European history. From the outset, the Christian goal was to reclaim the lands taken by the Muslims, and the struggle – known as the Reconquista – would torment the region for the best part of 800 years.

Buoyed by their initial successes, Muslim forces pressed north, reaching as far as Carcassonne, which was besieged in 725. The Franks were having none of this and Charles Martel made a decent fist of pushing the Islamic invaders back across the Pyrenees. Back in Iberia, the new regime was far from stable and attempts to impose order by the Umayyad overlords were stymied by the long distance between Damascus and Spain. In 756 a formal emirate was established at Córdoba but, while this provided a veneer of political stability, the in-fighting and territorial tiffs continued. Only under Abd al-Rahman II, who ruled from 822, did something approximating coherent governance begin to emerge.

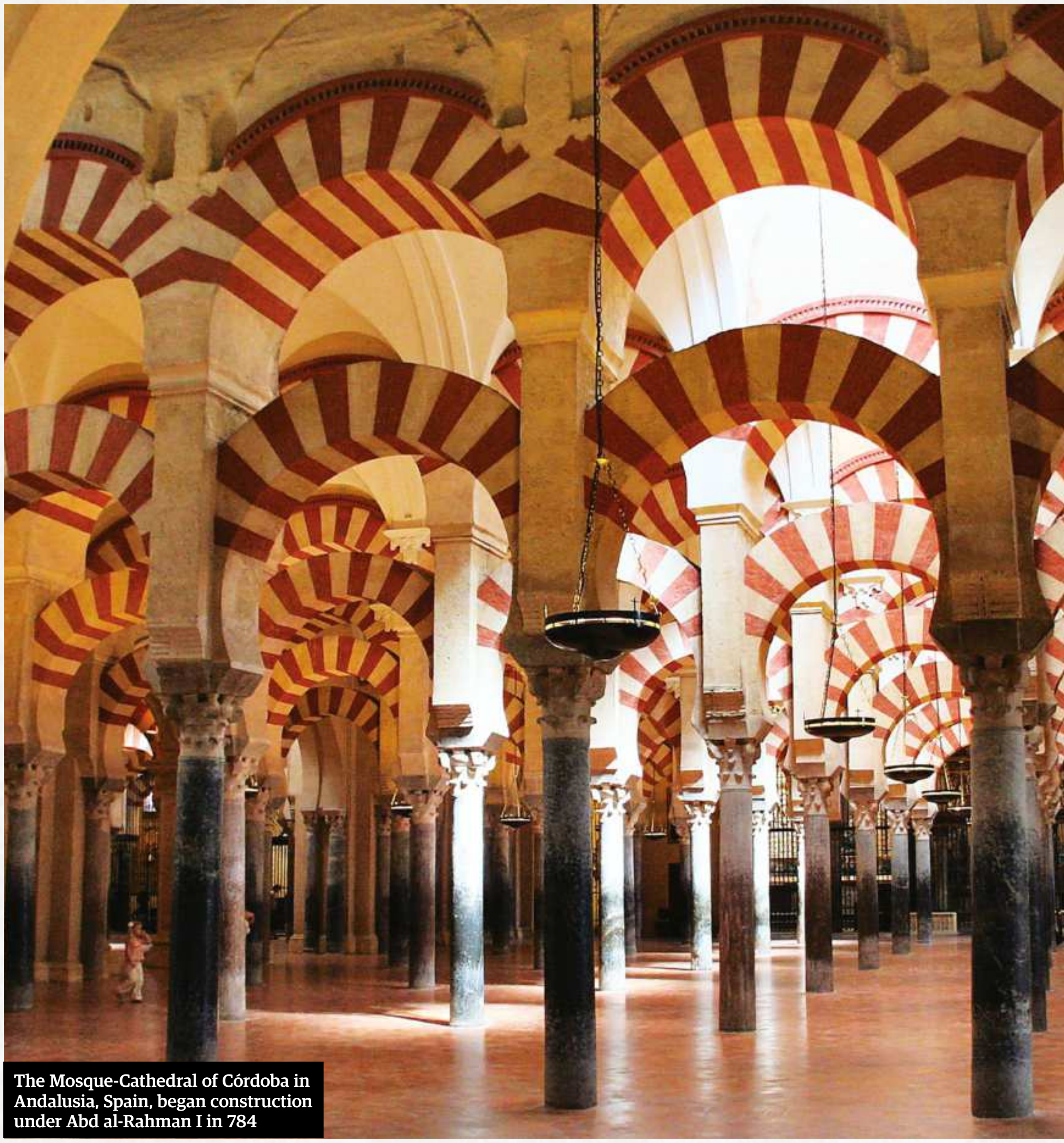
The Christian response to all this was passionate but fitful. As early as 718, or possibly 722, a rebellion led by Pelayo resulted in the Battle of Covadonga – often regarded as the beginning of the Reconquista. It was only a minor step forward, but it allowed for the establishment of a Christian foothold in northern Spain: the kingdom of Asturias. This fiefdom would expand quite rapidly – taking in Galicia, León and parts of the Douro Valley. Christian hopes had not been blotted out entirely and, with the discovery of the remains of the apostle Saint James in Galicia during the



The Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela, a focal point of Christian devotion and dreams of reconquest early 9th century, Christians were provided with a focus for their dreams of retaking the peninsula - the famous shrine and cathedral at Santiago de Compostela. The Franks were making inroads, too. Charlemagne managed to capture Pamplona in 778, and his son, Louis of Aquitaine, seized Barcelona in 801. A buffer zone - the so-called Marca Hispanica - was created. Even when things went terribly wrong for the Franks, it was possible to extract some propagandist value. The ambush of Frankish forces in the pass of Roncesvalles would, many years later, provide inspiration for the famous *Chanson de Roland:* a text that did much to rouse Christian spirits during the later stages of the Reconquista.

By the beginning of the 10th century, the Islamic position in Spain had become increasingly precarious but, under rulers such as Abd al-Rahman III (reigned 929-961) a period of resurgence began to unfold. Rahman was named caliph in 929 - very much a promotion from the earlier title of emir - and his reign saw notable expansion in trade and progress in the fields of diplomacy and cultural output. His successors revisited the policy of sacking far-flung parts of Spain with great efficiency. Barcelona, Coimbra and León would all be paid a visit by Islamic troops and, in 997, Christian Europe was appalled by the Muslim attack on the holy sites at Compostela. Bells were taken, melted down and then recast into lamps for use at the Muslims' exquisite mosques.

By the turn of the millennium it was hard to predict what the future might hold. Over the coming decades, new Christian kingdoms would establish themselves: Aragon, Navarre and, preeminently, Castile. A stroke of historical luck also arrived in 1031 with the demise of the mighty Umayyad dynasty. The resulting power vacuum granted the northern kingdoms a precious opportunity. Castile's first king, Ferdinand I, began



The Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba in Andalusia, Spain, began construction under Abd al-Rahman I in 784

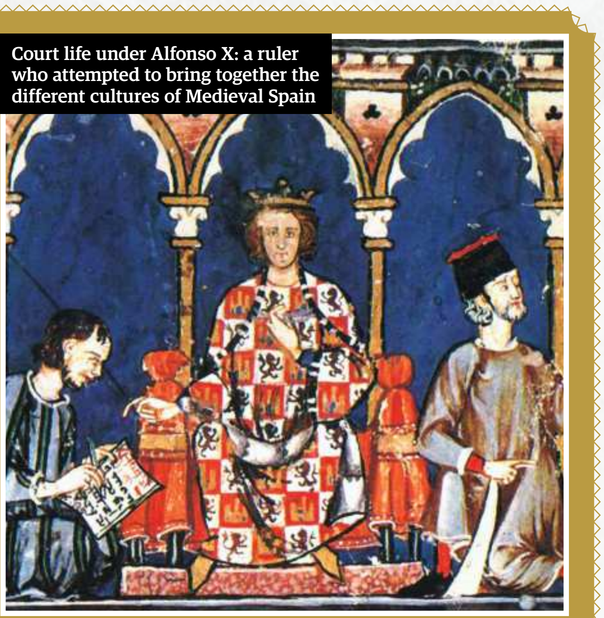
BOARD GAMES AND BATTLES

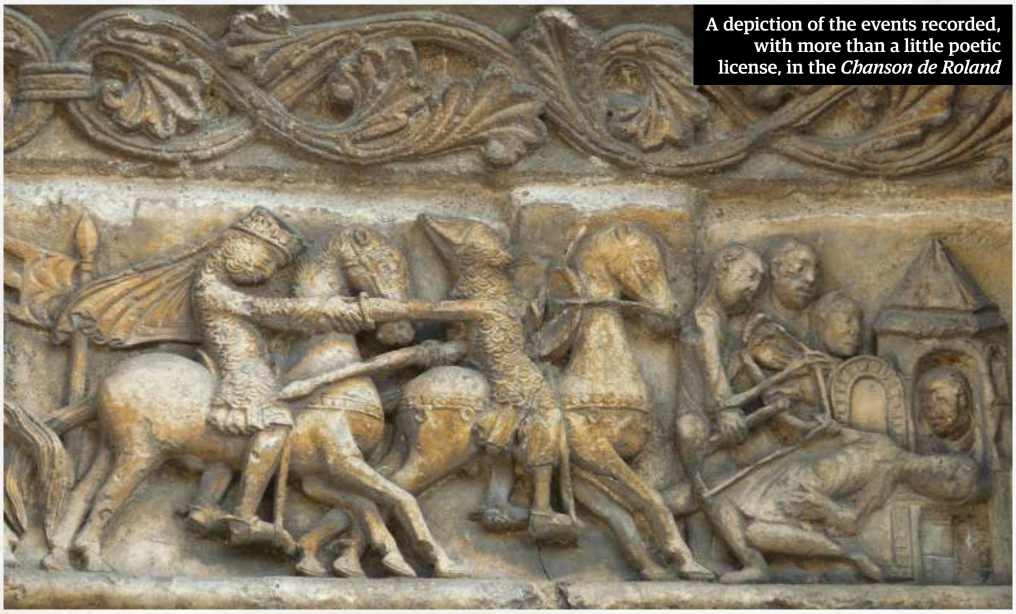
One Medieval ruler made efforts to bridge the gaps between the peninsula's faiths

It may be hard to credit but, amid all the bloodshed, bile and bewilderment of the Reconquista era, many Spaniards of all faiths found solace in playing chess. They were all doubtless delighted, then, with the arrival of the *Book of Games*, produced under the auspices of Alfonso X, ruler of the joint kingdoms of Castile, León and Galicia between 1252 and 1284. If you had to endure a siege, solving a tricky chess problem was a welcome distraction.

Alfonso's reign makes an important point about Medieval Spain: it was not a story of constant conflict and name-calling. In fleeting moments, those of different faiths managed to co-exist. True, Alfonso certainly didn't abandon the military campaigns against Islam, but at his court, Muslim, Jewish and Christian intellectuals traded theories, translations of Arabic texts were undertaken, and subjects as diverse as music and astronomy enjoyed something of a heyday. Alfonso was not the greatest of politicians - his ambition outstripped his abilities and he did not fare very well economically - but his poems weren't too bad, his sponsorship of music was admirable, and he set the Castilian vernacular on the road to becoming an elegant vehicle for literary expression. He spent most of his youth in Toledo where he soaked up the diversity of the city's many overlapping cultures. In later years, his famous scriptorium would become a place where, for a little while, Islam, Judaism and Christianity managed, albeit at a rarefied, scholarly level, to get along.

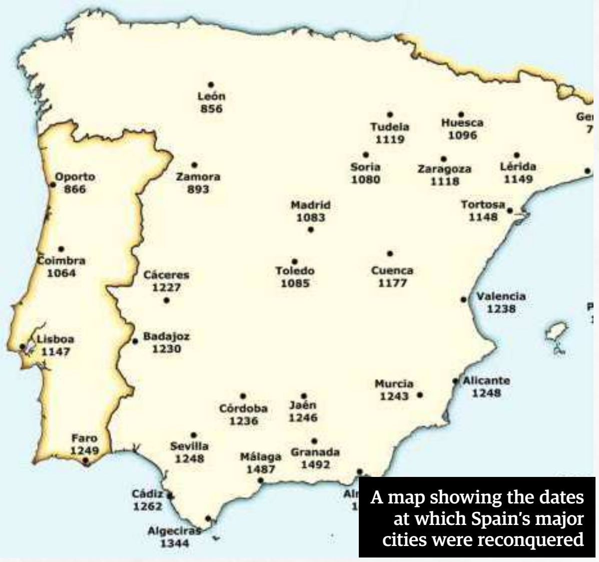
Court life under Alfonso X: a ruler who attempted to bring together the different cultures of Medieval Spain





A depiction of the events recorded, with more than a little poetic license, in the *Chanson de Roland*

The Pyxis of al-Mughira, a luxurious example of 10th-century Spanish ivory carving



A map showing the dates at which Spain's major cities were reconquered

"OVER THE NEXT DECADES MUSLIM-HELD CITIES AND PROVINCES FELL LIKE DOMINOES"

to make significant conquests from the 1050s and, in 1085 – during the reign of Alfonso VI – Toledo was taken: an event of huge symbolic importance.

New Islamic dynasties naturally attempted to shore up the Muslim presence in Spain: first the Almoravids of North Africa and then the Almohads, who would secure control over large swathes of the peninsula by the end of the 12th century. By this point, however, a vital new factor had entered the equation. Europe had become obsessed with the notion of crusade and, while control of Jerusalem and the Holy Land was always the primary goal, repelling the Muslim threat in Spain was eagerly embraced as another aspect of the crusading mission. As one Spanish bishop explained in 1125, "Just as the faithful soldiers of the holy church opened the way to Jerusalem with much toil and bloodshed, so we should become soldiers of Christ" and "beat a sharp and much less difficult path through the regions of Spain". Such ambitions began to blossom when Spain's northern kingdoms felt able to put aside their differences – at least from time to time – and make common cause.

Victory at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 is often seen as marking the start of the Christian comeback and, over the next decades Muslim-held cities and provinces fell like dominoes. Majorca and the Balearic islands were captured in 1235, Valencia was taken in 1238, Córdoba in 1236, and Seville in 1248. All of a sudden, Moorish Spain had been reduced to the enclave of Granada, and even this kingdom was now a vassal state, expected to provide substantial financial tributes to the Christian powers.

It is, perhaps, a little too easy to think of the Reconquista purely in terms of conflict and animosity. There was, of course, a good deal of both, but at times, however fleetingly, fruitful interaction and intellectual dialogue between Christian and Muslim was able to flourish. It is also worth noting that, as so often, choosing sides was not always a straightforward matter. On various occasions, Christian rulers would forge temporary alliances with their Muslim counterparts if it was to their mutual advantage. And that most famous of Reconquista figures, El Cid, made a fortune by selling his military skills to the highest bidder, regardless of which God they happened to worship.

The ultimate goal of obliterating Islam in Spain never went away. A curious pause in the story can be witnessed during the 14th and 15th centuries. Plagues raged, various dynasties stumbled from crisis to crisis, and there was no overwhelming imperative to capture the last Islamic bastion of Granada. Besides, the tribute money from the kingdom came in very handy.

The pace quickened during the first decades of the 15th century. Aragon was resurgent under Ferdinand I (reigned 1412-16) and his successors. Castilian rulers finally got around to bringing their over-mighty nobles to heel. But how to induce the final push? The moment came with the union of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile: married in 1469 and joint rulers from 1479. Everybody knew that Castile was the senior partner in a rather uneven relationship, but this only made some grand, unifying venture all the more desirable.

In 1481, the pretext for invasion arrived. Muslim forces raided the frontier town of Zahara. Before too long, the favour-seeking hacks were producing overblown predictions. In an attempt to court favour with Ferdinand, one of them announced that "there will be nothing in this world able to resist his might" and that he will "subdue all kingdoms from sea to sea [and] destroy all the Moors of Spain". And so the Christian troops stormed in, taking Ronda in 1485, Málaga and Almería in 1487 and, in 1491, Granada itself. By the following January, Ferdinand and Isabella were trotting into the city.

It was a moment of epochal change, one that had been prefigured by the fate of Córdoba's holiest building earlier in the century. The city could boast the second largest mosque in the world and, back in the days of the Umayyads, it had taken two centuries to complete. In the blink of an eye, as the Reconquista swept south, it was turned into a Christian church though, at least, no efforts were made to remove the ineffably beautiful arches of jasper, marble and onyx. Spain, in the decades following Granada's fall, would be less kind to the descendants of the people who had erected the mosque all those centuries ago.

CRUSADER KINGS

Inside Europe's quest to forge a holy empire in the Middle East through zeal and steel

Words by Peter Price

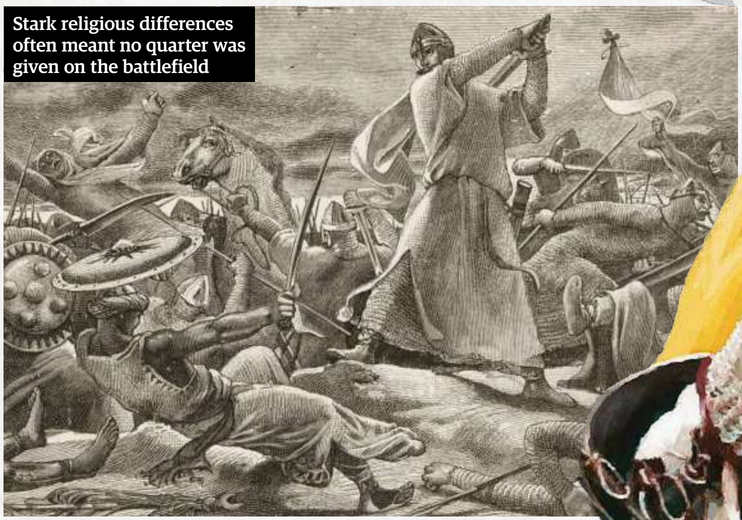
The Crusades were a struggle for the soul of the Holy Land, with Christian and Muslim forces clashing for over 200 years. While thousands of ordinary men fought for what they thought was right, seizing control of the Middle East's many religious sites and venerated cities, new military orders like the Knights Templar offered opportunity for advancement. Glory in battle could turn minor monarchs into living legends, and all-new dynasties were founded to rule the region. In time, a preoccupation with wealth and status would ultimately consume the Crusaders and shock polite society back in Europe with their avarice.

CALL TO ARMS

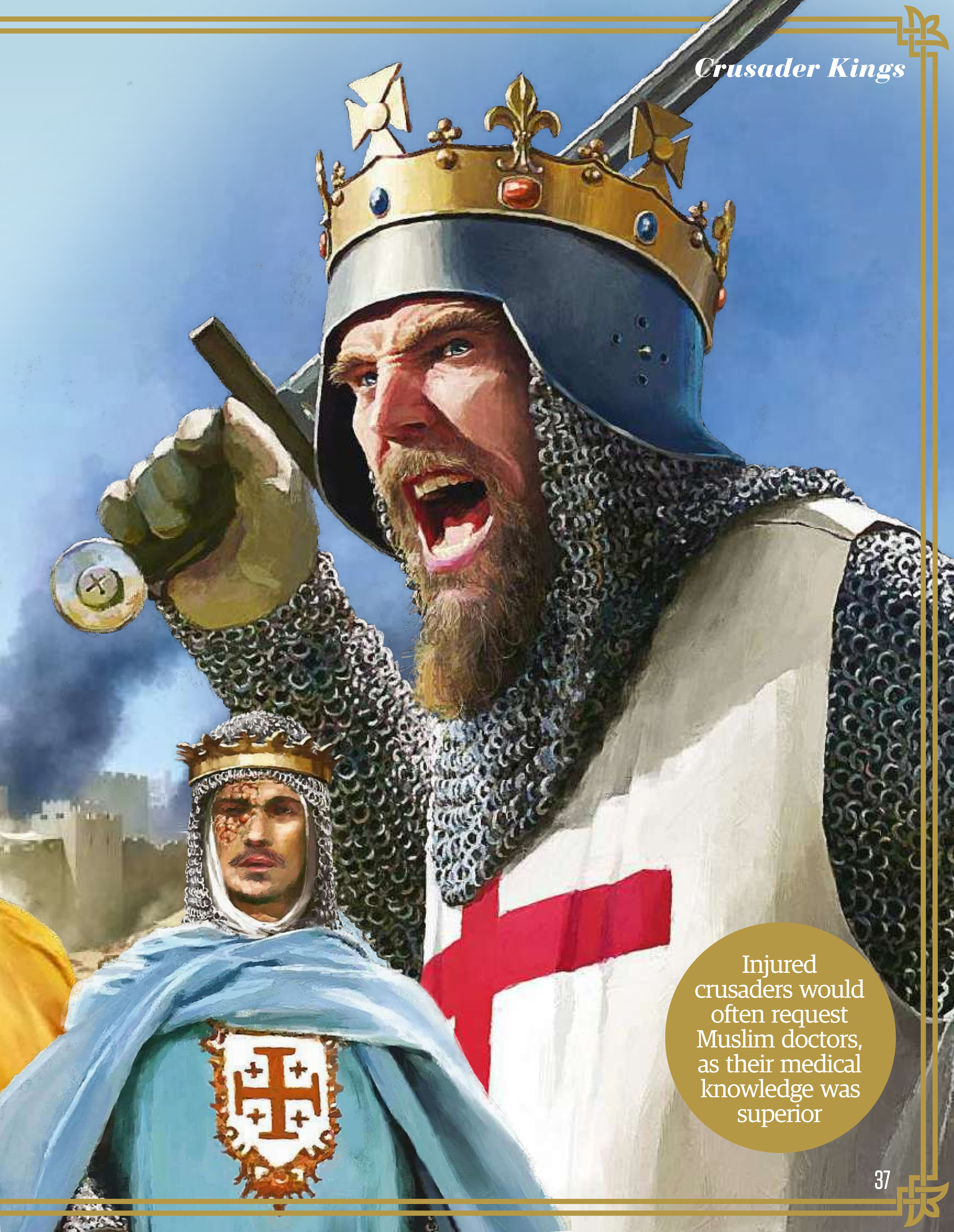
The First Crusade was called in 1095 by Pope Urban II, proclaiming, "Whoever for devotion alone, but not to gain honour or money, goes to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God can substitute this journey for all penance." The religious fervour that inspired Crusaders to leave their homes and travel thousands of miles to wage a holy war cannot be overstated. While (probably exaggerated) stories of Muslims persecuting native Christians and Western pilgrims in Jerusalem helped fuel support, the main driving force of the expeditions was that they offered a new way for men to attain salvation.

The zealous Crusaders referred to their force as the 'Army of God' and the fallen as 'dead martyrs'. However, that's not to say there weren't ulterior motives for the First Crusade. For one, the papacy was engaged in a mighty struggle with the Holy Roman emperor, Henry IV, and calling the crusade greatly enhanced Pope Urban II's standing. The Byzantine emperor Alexios I had also beseeched Urban II to send military aid to help him fight

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY



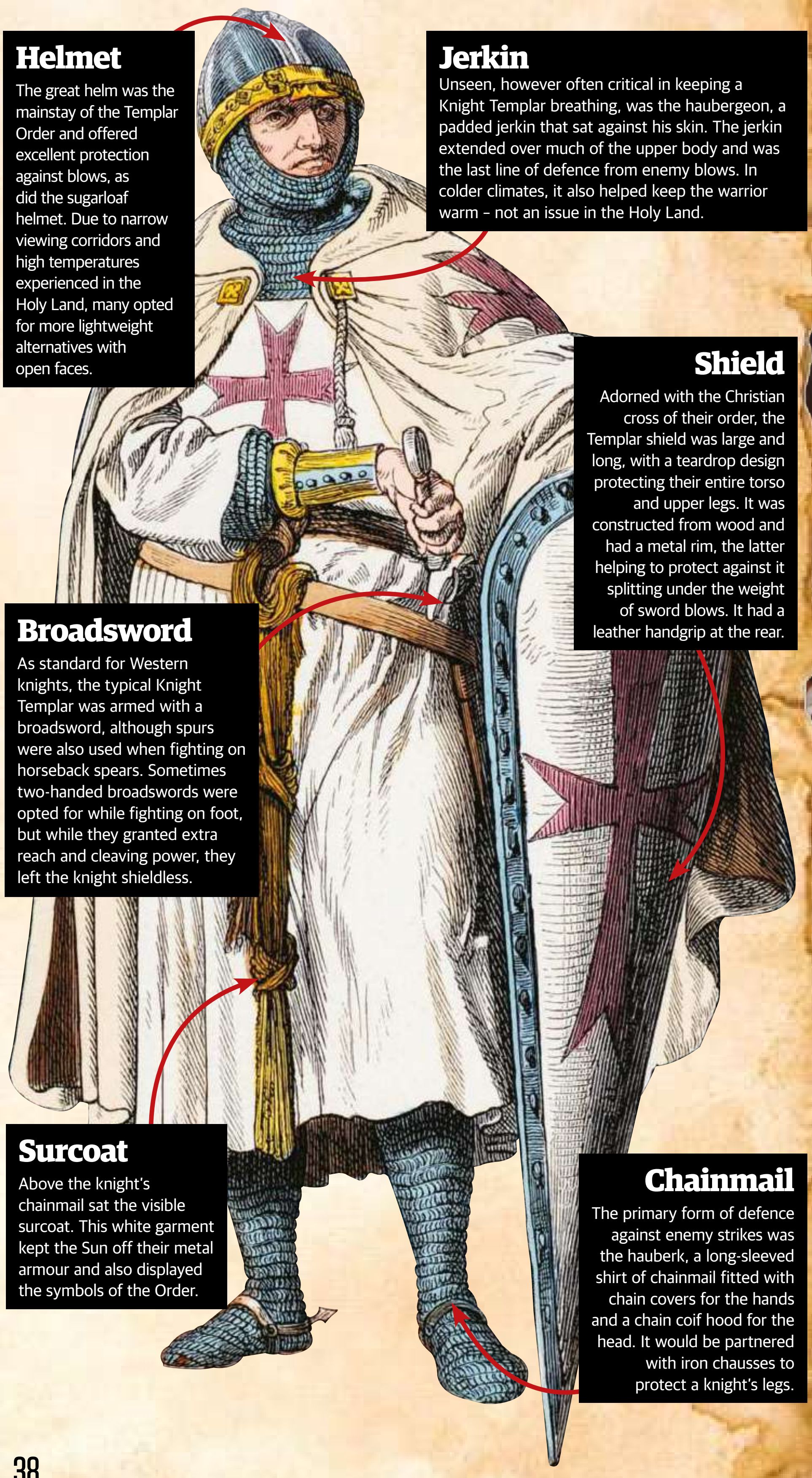
Stark religious differences often meant no quarter was given on the battlefield



Injured crusaders would often request Muslim doctors, as their medical knowledge was superior

ANATOMY OF A TEMPLAR KNIGHT

The key kit and weapons carried by the most elite of Christian warriors



Helmet

The great helm was the mainstay of the Templar Order and offered excellent protection against blows, as did the sugarloaf helmet. Due to narrow viewing corridors and high temperatures experienced in the Holy Land, many opted for more lightweight alternatives with open faces.

Jerkin

Unseen, however often critical in keeping a Knight Templar breathing, was the haubergeon, a padded jerkin that sat against his skin. The jerkin extended over much of the upper body and was the last line of defence from enemy blows. In colder climates, it also helped keep the warrior warm – not an issue in the Holy Land.

Shield

Adorned with the Christian cross of their order, the Templar shield was large and long, with a teardrop design protecting their entire torso and upper legs. It was constructed from wood and had a metal rim, the latter helping to protect against it splitting under the weight of sword blows. It had a leather handgrip at the rear.

Broadsword

As standard for Western knights, the typical Knight Templar was armed with a broadsword, although spurs were also used when fighting on horseback spears. Sometimes two-handed broadswords were opted for while fighting on foot, but while they granted extra reach and cleaving power, they left the knight shieldless.

Surcoat

Above the knight's chainmail sat the visible surcoat. This white garment kept the Sun off their metal armour and also displayed the symbols of the Order.

Chainmail

The primary form of defence against enemy strikes was the hauberk, a long-sleeved shirt of chainmail fitted with chain covers for the hands and a chain coif hood for the head. It would be partnered with iron chausses to protect a knight's legs.

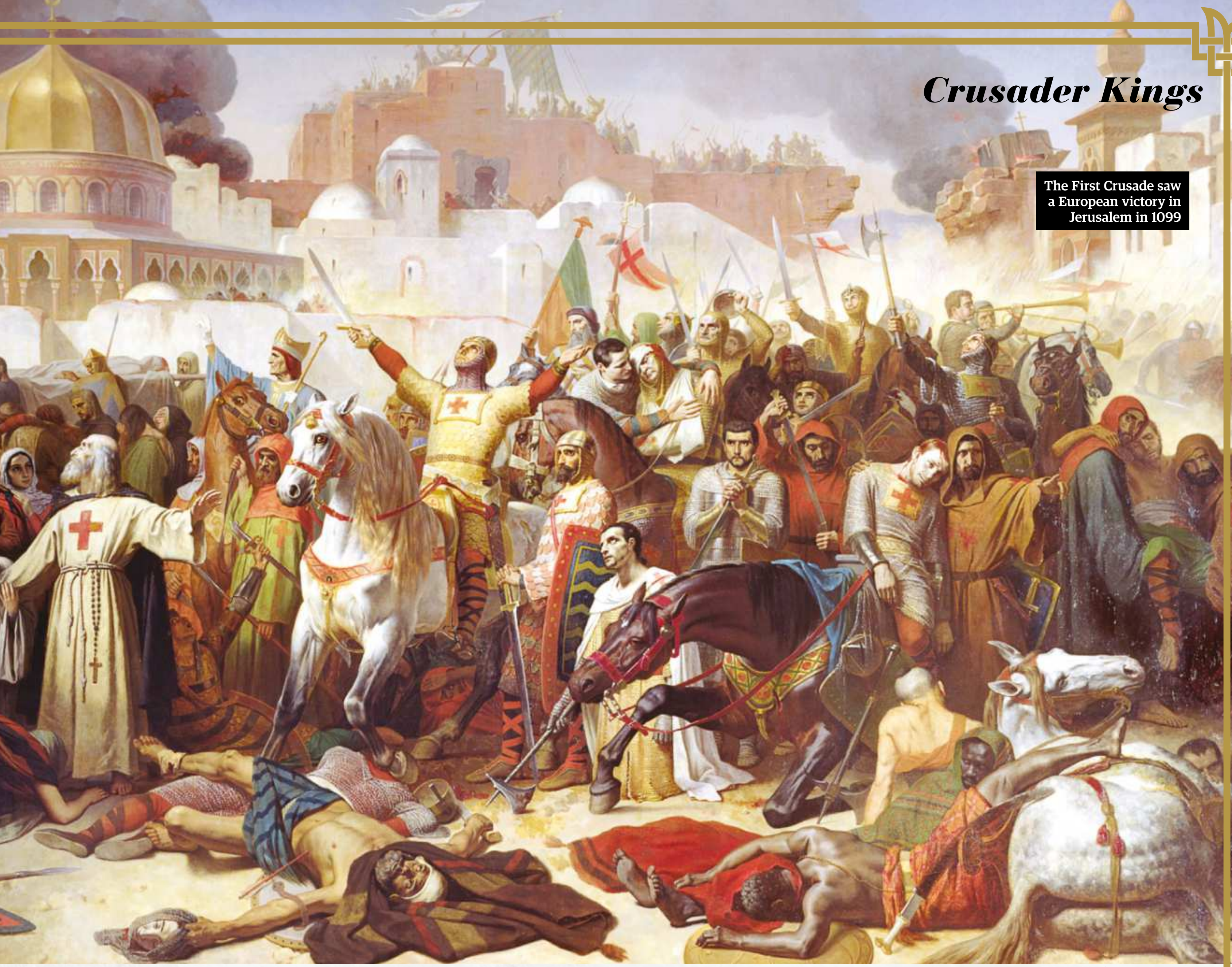
IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

Seljuk Turks encroaching on his border. Relations between the Catholic West and Orthodox East had long been fractious, and the pontiff saw it as an opportunity to improve relations.

Four armies of Crusaders were formed from troops of different parts of Europe, led by high-ranking nobles including Raymond of Saint-Gilles, Godfrey of Bouillon, Hugh of Vermandois and Bohemond of Taranto (along with his nephew Tancred). While people from all social classes 'took the cross', it's notable that no kings fought in the First Crusade. A fifth column of less-organised knights and commoners known as 'the People's Crusade' was also led by a popular preacher called Peter the Hermit.

The Crusaders marched overland to Constantinople, the capital of the mighty Byzantine Empire, in August 1096. Peter's army arrived first and did not heed Emperor Alexios I's advice to wait for back-up before attacking. In the first major clash between the Crusaders and Muslims, Turkish forces crushed the invading Europeans at Civetot.

Once the full force of Christians arrived, the Crusades quickly went their way. In quick succession they overthrew the city Nicaea, the



The First Crusade saw a European victory in Jerusalem in 1099

IMAGE SOURCE: ÉMILE SIGNOL

Seljuk capital of Anatolia; the Roman Empire's former third city, Antioch, in June 1098; and Jerusalem in 1099. The capture of the holy city saw the Crusaders unleash an orgy of destruction, killing men, women and children, with both Jews and Muslims targeted as the city was 'cleansed' of religious opposition.

Before they crossed the Bosporus, Alexios I had tried to make the Latin forces swear an oath of allegiance to him, recognising his authority over any land regained from the Turks as well as any other territory they might conquer. Tellingly, all but Bohemond – who had previously fought the Byzantines and wanted to get back in their good books – resisted taking the oath.

With the Holy Land now under Western control, it was divided into settlements, collectively known as Outremer, literally meaning 'overseas' in French. These were comprised of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Principality of Antioch and the counties of Tripoli and Edessa. However, while a new Latin aristocracy sprang up in the Middle East, most Crusaders returned home with their plunder, leaving the small and fractured kingdoms to stand alone against the still numerous and powerful Islamic rulers. While they were protected

CALCULATING THE FIRST CRUSADE

35,000
European Christians who fought in the First Crusade

10,000
People killed in the sack of Jerusalem

2,700 MILES
Walking distance from Paris to Jerusalem

4
The number of states created by the Crusaders in the Holy Land

2
The number of times the crusading army was (allegedly) reduced to cannibalism

by mighty fortresses, these states hung on a knife edge and constantly struggled for survival.

HOLY EMPIRE

While the Outremer states were being carved up, the nobles who led the Crusade were coy about being crowned ruler. When Raymond of Saint-Gilles refused to be crowned, Godfrey of Bouillon accepted it but refused the title of king - preferring to be called 'Defender of the Holy Sepulchre' instead.

However, down the years Godfrey's successors had no such qualms. His brother Baldwin became the first Crusader king in 1100, expanding the Kingdom of Jerusalem into modern-day Israel, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. He died leading raids on Islamic Egypt. His successor, another cousin who became Baldwin II, continued to conqueror territory for the kingdom.

But it was under a queen that Jerusalem enjoyed a golden age. Baldwin II's half-French, half-Armenian daughter, Melisende, was married to Fulk of Anjou, a French aristocrat with close ties to both the French and English crowns. However, it was she, groomed to rule from a young age, who held the real power from 1131. Capable of cowing her husband until his death in 1143, Melisende also served as regent for her 13-year-old son, another Baldwin. She not only built today's Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but also the Tomb of the Virgin Mary and the markets of Jerusalem that survive to this day.

It was also Melisende who sounded the alarm that led Pope Eugenius III to call for the Second Crusade in 1145. In December 1144, Zengi, the Muslim ruler of Aleppo and Mosul, captured Edessa. Melisende sent armies to save the Crusader state, but without further reinforcements the last-ditch effort was bound to fail. The other major Crusader state, Antioch, was preoccupied with its own fight with the Byzantines, so the Latin settlers requested help from the West.

Eager to live up to their Crusading forefathers, this time many royals took the cross, most notably King Louis VII of France and Emperor Conrad III of Germany. Louis was also joined by his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who travelled with him to Constantinople and Jerusalem. Though it's said Eleanor insisted on leading the soldiers from her duchy into battle, claims that she dressed as an Amazon while doing so are disputed.

Though the Second Crusade amassed vastly larger forces than the First, sending 50,000 to the Holy Land, it was not a success. The Western forces lacked discipline, supplies and finance, and were badly bloodied by the Seljuk Turks as they crossed Asia Minor.

While the original focus had been saving Edessa, by the time French and Germans arrived in 1147, it was firmly under control of Nur ad-Din, Zengi's successor. Instead, the Crusaders targeted the Muslim city of Damascus. Yet four days into their siege, Nur ad-Din arrived with reinforcements, leading to a humiliating retreat. The Europeans returned home in 1148, leaving Jerusalem strategically weaker than when they had arrived.

To complicate matters, around this time Melisende fell out with her son, Baldwin III. Now seven years into his majority, the queen still held the reins of power, unwilling to let her headstrong son take the throne as sole monarch. A compromise was reached where Baldwin governed the north of the region while Melisende

> Crusades were also fought against Muslims in Spain, pagans in the Baltic, and even the Mongols

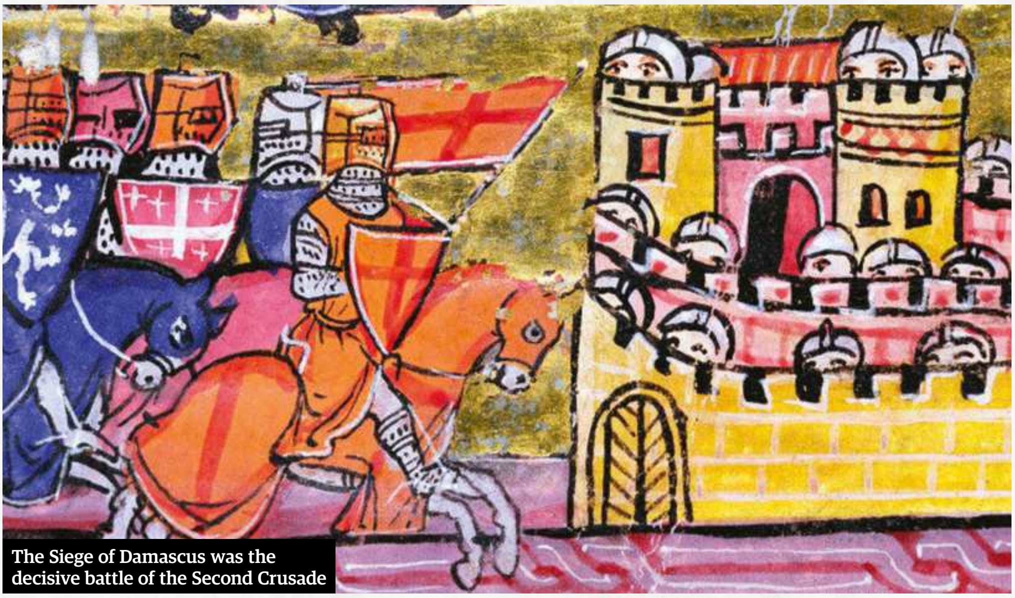
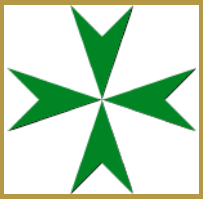

The Siege of Damascus was the decisive battle of the Second Crusade

IMAGE SOURCE: ÉMILE SIGNOL

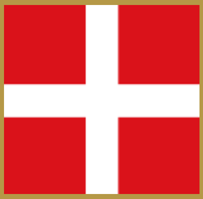
THE OTHER ORDERS

Warrior monks who packed a punch

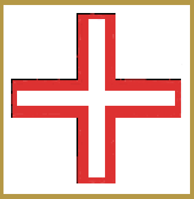
THE ORDER OF ST LAZARUS


As its name may suggest, this Order found its origins and recruits from various leper hospitals around the Holy Land. A knight who contracted the deadly and feared disease was expected to join their military ranks until his condition deteriorated.

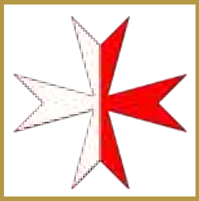
ORDER OF KNIGHTS OF THE HOSPITAL OF SAINT JOHN


Also known as the Knights Hospitaller or the Order of St John, this Order was originally created to care for sick pilgrims en route to the Holy Land. After being expelled from the Middle East, it focused on attacking Islamic shipping in the Mediterranean.

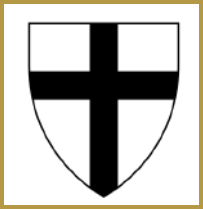
THE KNIGHTS OF ST THOMAS

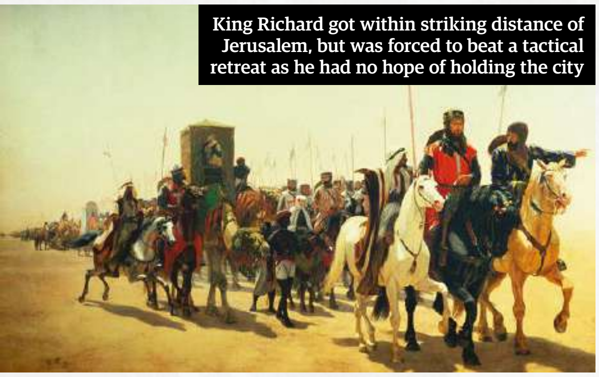

Another Order of hospitallers, this one was founded during the Third Crusade to minister to the sick and wounded and bury Crusader dead. However, it only recruited English knights so, unsurprisingly, the Order's numbers were never very high.

THE ORDER OF MOUNTJOY


This military order named itself after Montjoie, the hill where the first Crusaders set their eyes on Jerusalem. Originally charged with protecting pilgrims in Spain, the Order received donations from King Baldwin IV and fought with the Christian army at the horns of Hattin.

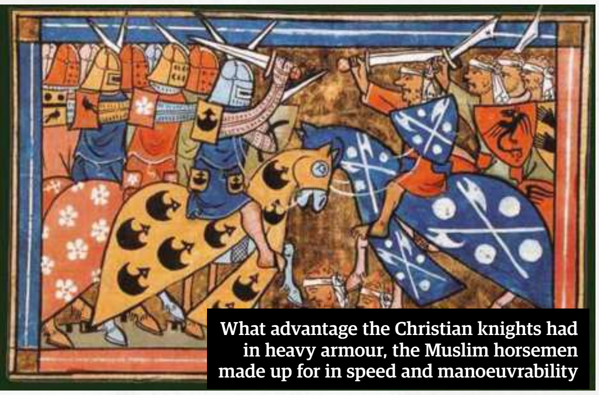
THE TEUTONIC ORDER


More commonly known as the Teutonic Knights, this German Order was established after the Siege of Acre in 1191. Tasked with protecting pilgrims, the Teutonic Knights were very active in both the Holy Land and the eastern European Crusades against the Baltic pagans.



King Richard got within striking distance of Jerusalem, but was forced to beat a tactical retreat as he had no hope of holding the city

IMAGE SOURCE: JAMES WILLIAM GLASS



What advantage the Christian knights had in heavy armour, the Muslim horsemen made up for in speed and manoeuvrability

took Judea and Samaria. However, civil war broke out when Baldwin invaded his mother's territory. Mother and son eventually reconciled, with Melisende retiring in 1154. After his rule was stabilised, Baldwin was free to defend the borders of the kingdom. After a prolonged campaign, Baldwin finally scored a decisive victory, defeating Nur ad-Din in 1158.

SALADIN'S JIHAD

The succession of the kings and queens of Outremer was never a certainty, and Baldwin III's nephew Baldwin IV was no exception. Although a bright youth, his tutors became increasingly concerned over his apparent high pain tolerance when playing with other children. This perceived bravery at pain soon gave way to shocking news - the future king had leprosy. Crowned in 1174, his rule was expected to be brief and not much hope was held that he would be any sort of leader beyond a figurehead.

Baldwin IV quickly dismissed this notion by taking a hard military stance. Conducting raids and skirmishes, the young king won a number of surprising victories against the encroaching Saladin, a sultan who had united much of Egypt, Iraq and Syria under one banner, having his eyes set on Jerusalem.

However, by 1183 weeping sores all over Baldwin's body had rendered it almost useless, with his vision also blurring to the point of near blindness. As a testament to his rule and reputation, upon hearing the 'Leper King' had joined the army defending Jerusalem, albeit carried on a litter, Saladin retreated and would not attack again until Baldwin had passed away in 1185.

THE KINGDOMS OF HEAVEN

European Christians carved out a home in the sands of the Middle East

Byzantine Empire

The continuation of the Roman Empire in the east, this powerful state had a tepid relationship with the Christian West. Although mutual military expeditions were common, the sacking of its capital, Constantinople, by the Fourth Crusade was the empire's death blow.

Seljuk Turks

An old enemy to Byzantium and a new foe for Latin Christendom, the Turks' empire was a powerful threat to Christendom in the Holy Land. It was Turkish aggression against the Eastern Roman Empire that prompted Emperor Alexios to ask the Catholic Church for military aid, helping to birth the Crusader movement.

County of Edessa

The first Crusader state to be set up, Edessa served as a barrier between the Seljuk empires of Anatolia and Mesopotamia. It was also the first state to fall and did so in 1144, although it was not considered strategically important enough to recapture.

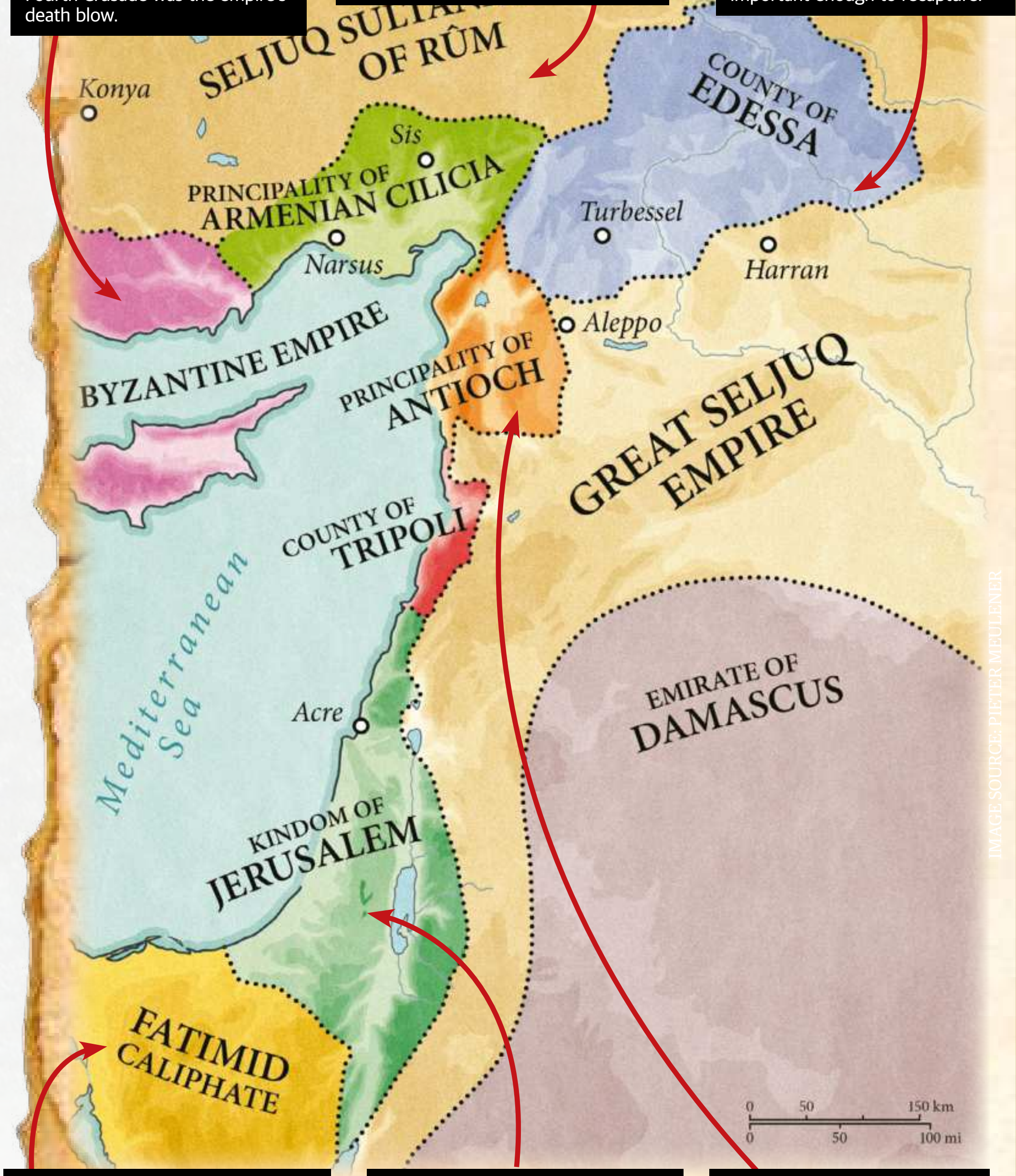


IMAGE SOURCE: PIETER MEULENER

Fatimid Caliphate

Claiming rulership from Fatima, the prophet Muhammad's daughter, the Fatimids ruled Egypt during the time of the First Crusade. Although they had a rich and fertile landm the caliphate was wracked by rebellion and division in the 11th and 12th centuries, which saw it fall to Saladin.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem was the objective of the Crusaders and a sacred place for most living in the Holy Land. The sack of the city by the Crusaders in 1099 was an orgy of bloodshed and vented frustrations, and it all but wiped out the Muslim and Jewish population of the city at the time.

Antioch

Once the third city of the Roman Empire, Antioch and the land surrounding it would be a continuous point of contention between the kings of Jerusalem and the Byzantine Empire, who believed the city should belong to them.

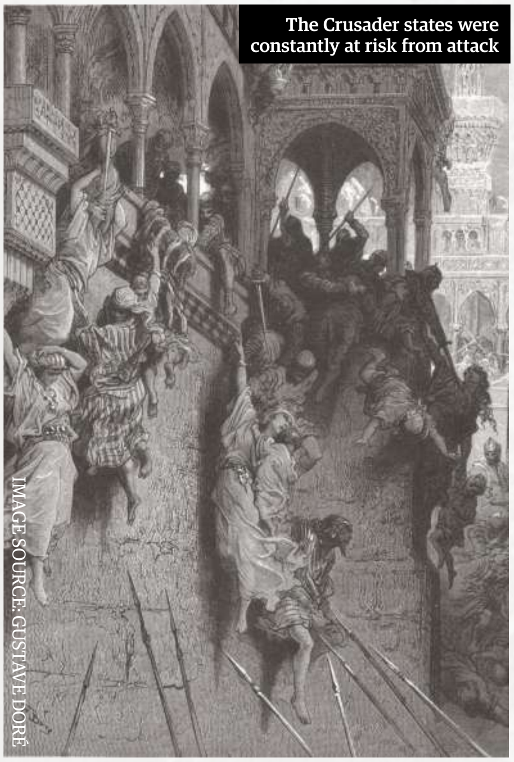

The Crusader states were constantly at risk from attack

IMAGE SOURCE: GUSTAVE DORÉ

By this time, the Crusader states had been emptied of fighting men so that all the castle and towns were left with tiny and inexperienced garrisons. The new ruler of Jerusalem, King Guy, was also a military novice, to the point that he marched his army away from precious water sources while chasing Saladin's men in the desert. Delirious with thirst and heat, these men were cut down at the Battle of Hattin in 1187.

With no one left to stand in his way, Saladin snatched Jerusalem from Christian hands. However, it's noteworthy that the sultan did allow the Christian population to buy their way to freedom, and even let them haggle the price down. A stark contrast to the Crusaders' bloody rape of the city almost 100 years prior.

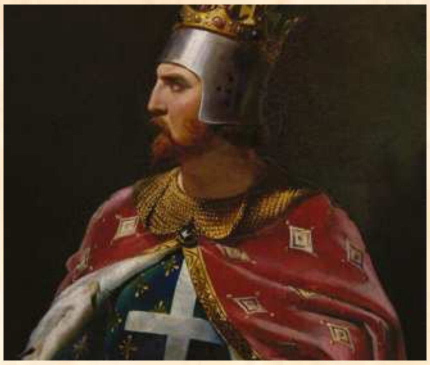
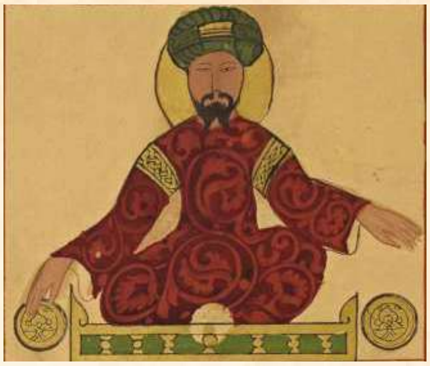
RISE LIKE LIONS

The loss of the holy city once again sent shock waves through Christendom, and the Third Crusade was quickly called to re-establish Western control. This Crusade would come to be characterised by the rivalry between Saladin and King Richard I of England. Although they would never actually meet in person, the two giants would clash time and time again on the sands of Outremer and achieve legendary status in their respective communities.

The Third Crusade would again be a royal one with three monarchs, Richard I of England, Philip II of France and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, all taking the cross. Commanding the largest land, Emperor Frederick was the obvious choice to lead the army. His experience of fighting the Muslims and his massive army of 100,000 men, the largest Crusading force at that time, would be invaluable to retake the Holy Land.

However, his triumphant march across Europe was cut short while crossing a river in Armenia ahead of his army. The king's horse shied on a bridge and plunged him into the raging water. Probably weighed down by his armour, Frederick was dragged under and drowned in a rather unceremonious end for the glorious emperor. His son, eager to see his father reach the Holy Land, ordered his body to be pickled in vinegar and transported the rest of the way. The emperor's remains were spread across the Holy Land and divided between different churches.

The most prominent leader of the Crusade was dead and now was the chance for Richard I to take up the mantle of leader. Son of Eleanor of

	WARFARE	RUTHLESSNESS	EFFECTIVENESS
RICHARD  IMAGE SOURCE: MERRY-JOSEPH BLONDEL	Richard's tactical prowess meant that he never lost many battles in the Middle East. By leading from the front, being brave and sharing the campaign's hardships with his men, he earned their respect as their commander. Back in Europe, he was revered as a military genius, and he carried the continent's hopes. ★★★★☆	Richard's massacre of the captured garrison at Acre was a barbaric and calculated act. Possibly unwilling to allocate the men and resources needed to keep them imprisoned, their execution relieved him of a humanitarian obligation and served to solidify his fearsome reputation among the Muslim army. ★★★★☆	Despite winning many battles, Richard failed to achieve his one main objective: to take Jerusalem. News of rebellion and treachery from his kingdom back in northern Europe forced him to abandon his Crusade in order to keep his crown. This may have damaged morale among the Crusaders. ★★★★☆
SALADIN  IMAGE SOURCE: ISMAIL AL-JAZARI	Saladin, a Kurdish ruler, was not as hands-on in battle as Richard was, but his strategic manoeuvring brought victory after victory for his army. As the man who recaptured Jerusalem, he was widely loved and praised in the Islamic world. Even Saladin's name was enough to strike fear into the hearts of his enemies. ★★★★☆	Although Saladin is often seen as a chivalric and merciful figure, he too had a ruthless streak. As well as selling many captured Christians into a life of slavery, he also ordered the slaughtering of Knights Templar and Hospitaller prisoners after the Battle of Hattin, apparently delighting in the butchery. ★★★☆☆	Ruling over both Egypt and Syria, Saladin was able to unite most of the Islamic world one banner – though some sects, such as the Ismaili 'Assassins', still hated him. While his exploits against the Crusaders made him famous, he spent the majority of his time fighting and subduing rival Muslim rulers. ★★★☆☆

Aquitaine and her second husband, Henry II, the English king only had a middling reputation when he set off for war, but by the end he would be regarded as a legend.

Earning the nickname 'Lionheart' for his courage, Richard also dazzled the European and Middle Eastern leaders with his charisma. Many Crusaders over the years mortgaged their properties and sold their personal possessions to pay for their wars, but Richard took this a step further and looked to sell his new English kingdom for the chance to capture the holy city. He raised funds by any means necessary, even allegedly selling nobles and government officials their lands and titles back. Material wealth was not a concern and he once alledgedly quipped that he would have sold London if he could have found a buyer.

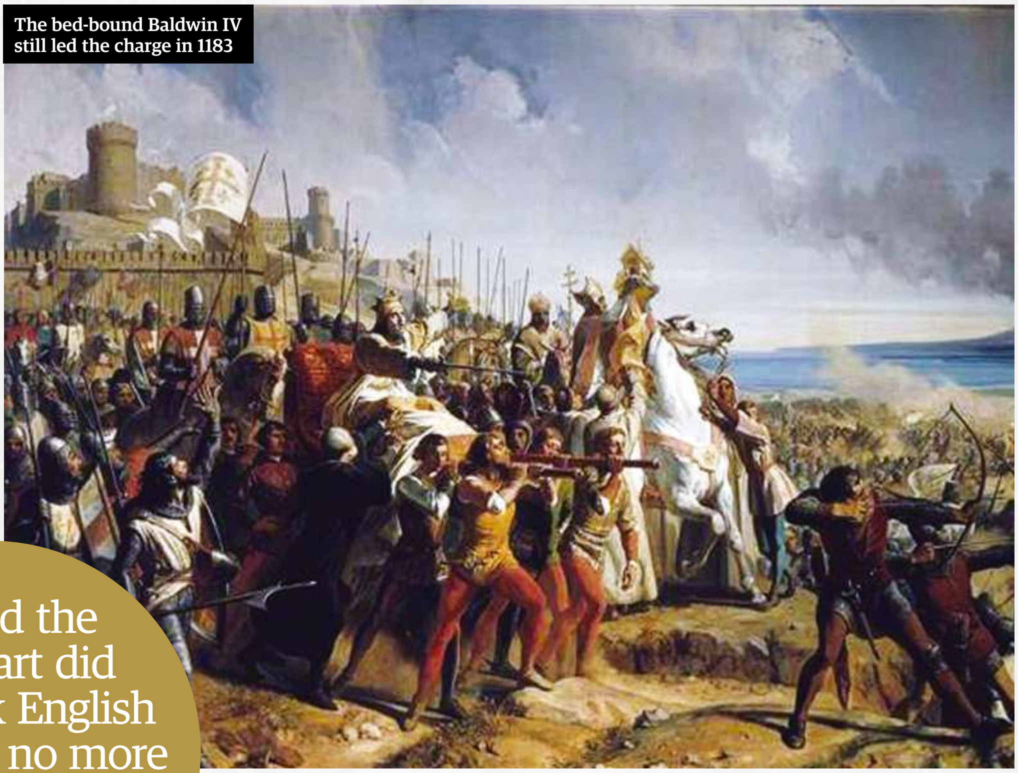

The bed-bound Baldwin IV still led the charge in 1183

IMAGE SOURCE: CHARLES-PHILIPPE LARIVIÈRE

Richard the Lionheart did not speak English and spent no more than six months in England during his reign

In June 1191, the king of England made a grand entrance at the Siege of Acre. For months now, Christian forces had been pecking away at the city's defences and a victory here would deal a great blow to Saladin's reputation and power in the region. Thanks to Richard's renewed efforts, the city fell a little over a month later. Richard had won a great victory, but deep divisions in the Crusader camp had split the army. Most notably, Philip had never shared Richard's zeal and this, coupled with the hot climate and exotic diseases, saw the French contingent leave soon after Acre was conquered.

As Saladin's army had been engaging the Crusaders throughout the siege, tense negotiations on prisoner transfers were now taking place. This sets the scene for one of the most controversial acts of barbarism in crusading history. The hefty ransoms pushed on Saladin were more than the emir could afford at that moment, and as time drew on, many believed the lack of payment was a delaying tactic designed to keep the Crusaders mired at Acre. With rumours of the Muslims killing their Christian prisoners, Richard ordered the captured garrison, around 3,000 men, to be brought out and slaughtered in full view of the Muslim army.

Abysmal winter weather battered the army on its march to Jerusalem and made any long-term occupation of the area impossible. With his goal tantalisingly close, Richard ordered the retreat back to the coast. Jerusalem was to remain in Muslim hands, and while the Europeans had made meaningful gains along the coast, their sole objective had eluded them.

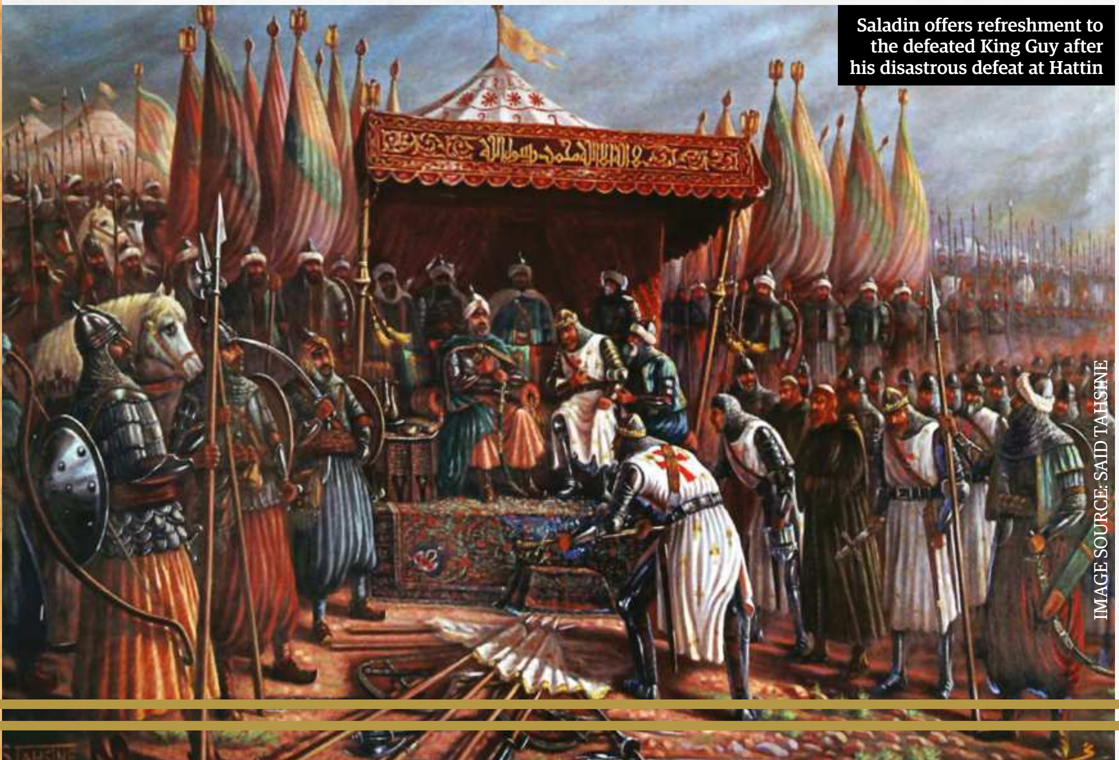

Saladin offers refreshment to the defeated King Guy after his disastrous defeat at Hattin

IMAGE SOURCE: SAID TAHSINE

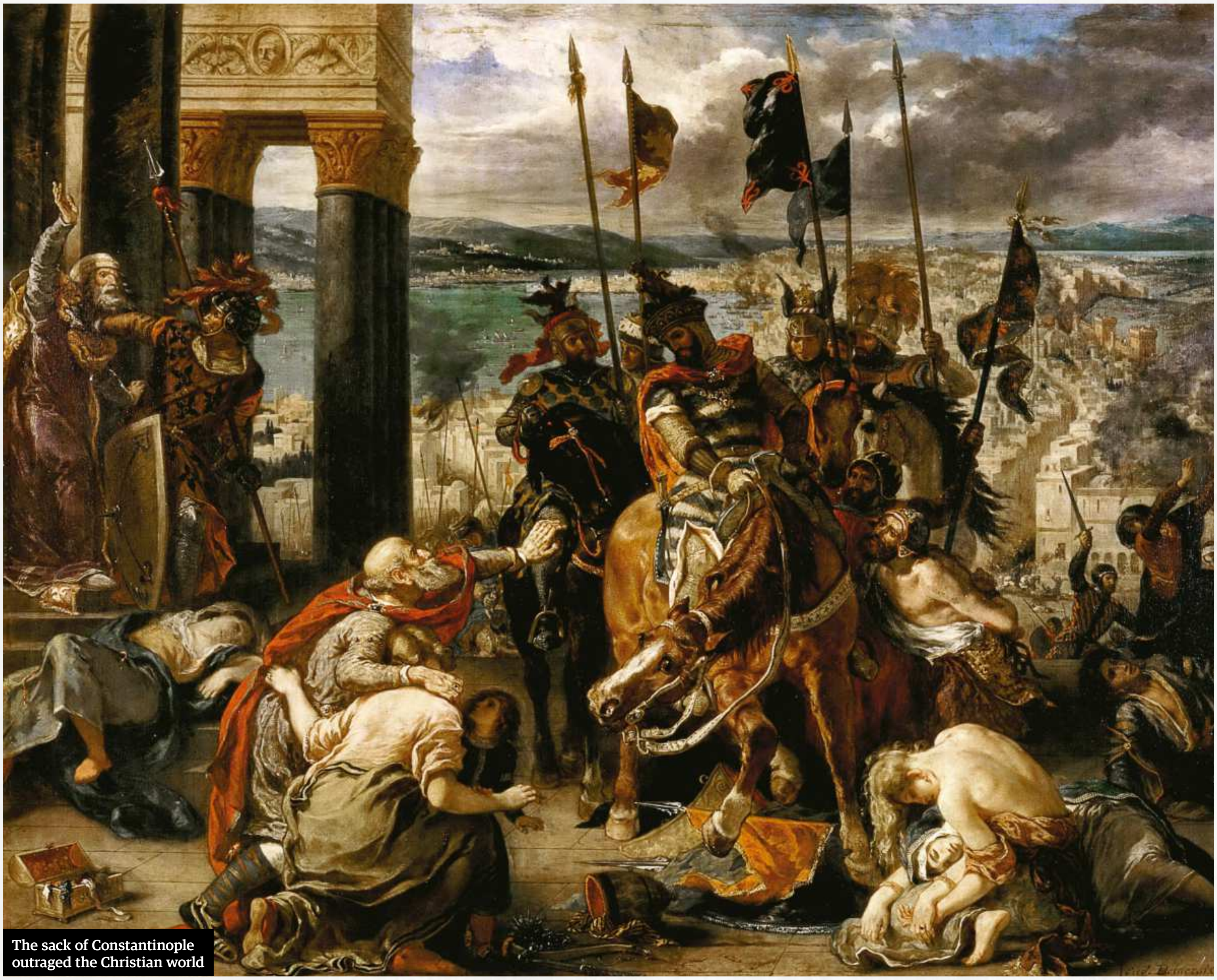
THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

With the failure of the Third Crusade to take Jerusalem, another was quickly called for, and in 1202, the Fourth Crusade was well underway. However, this proved to be an abject failure that only served to deepen the divide between the Eastern and Western Churches.

The Fourth Crusade would cause widespread scandal in Europe for its violence against fellow Christians. The Crusades, which had been started as a holy war against the Muslims and perceived Christian persecution, were now willing participants. Attacking and capturing the Christian city of Zara to pay off their great debt to Venice, Pope Innocent III flew into a rage and excommunicated the Venetians.

From here the Crusade swung round to Constantinople, where the knights became embroiled in a dynastic dispute in the Byzantine Empire. With all thought of a holy war thrown to the wayside, the Christians assaulted and sacked the city when it became clear that money promised to them for helping the exiled prince take the throne would not materialise. In an orgy of destruction, one of the greatest Christian cities was stripped bare of its wealth and it inhabitants subjected to horrific pillaging.

The Venetians made off with countless priceless artefacts, with the four massive metal horses now adorning St Mark's Cathedral in Venice being the most famous.



The sack of Constantinople outraged the Christian world

IMAGE SOURCE: EUGÈNE DELACROIX

Innocent III condemned the sacking, calling out the Crusaders for their barbarity - but unlike the aftermath at Zara, he did not excommunicate anyone who had taken part. He possibly saw the sacking as the subsequent carving up of the Byzantine territory as a way to unify the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and heal the rift between the crusaders and the Byzantines.

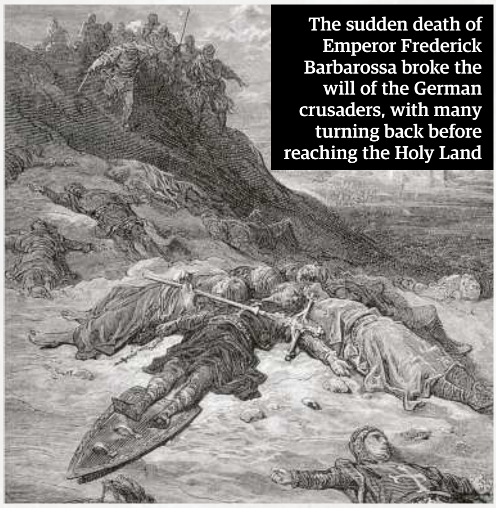
This view quickly faded as news of the horrific attack on the city made its way west. Attempting to keep Crusading on a tight papal leash, Innocent III drew focus away from fighting pagans in France and Spain and reoriented Europe's crusading eye once more on the Holy Land. With these fixed objectives also came the refocusing of military strategy by the Latin Crusaders. It would be Egypt, not Jerusalem, that would become the target this time. His plan to take Egypt, echoed by the leaders of subsequent Crusades, looked to cut off the Muslim-occupied city from its power base and take out the majority of Muslim power in the Middle East in one fell swoop. These expeditions, like the ones before, failed to achieve their goal.

> While thousands of young people joined the Children's Crusade of 1212, none of them reached Jerusalem

The European Crusaders liked to think of themselves as superior, both martially and spiritually, to all who lived in the Holy Land. When they made the journey by land or sea, it was to bring the fight to the infidel, not to coexist nicely with them. Much to the new arrivals' chagrin, Muslim life in the Crusader states continued with the sporadic European influxes. Latin Christians took on Arabic customs such as regular bathing, and even a poor knight or noble could wear sumptuous silks that would make a European noble's head turn.

While the armies of Europe were responsible for much of the Crusade's success, they didn't really aid the long-term survival of the conquered teritories and Crusading in general. Each Crusade, excluding the disastrous fourth, would see thousands of men descend on the Holy Land to wreak havoc, only for many to return home once their task was completed. This shortage of manpower was a problem from the very first beginning as trained military men were required to garrison the towns and castles captured in the name of Christendom.

The knightly orders like the Templar and Hospitaller stepped up to fill the gaps left by the retreating Europeans, but the ebbing of men from the Holy Land slowly drained the Crusader states'



The sudden death of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa broke the will of the German crusaders, with many turning back before reaching the Holy Land

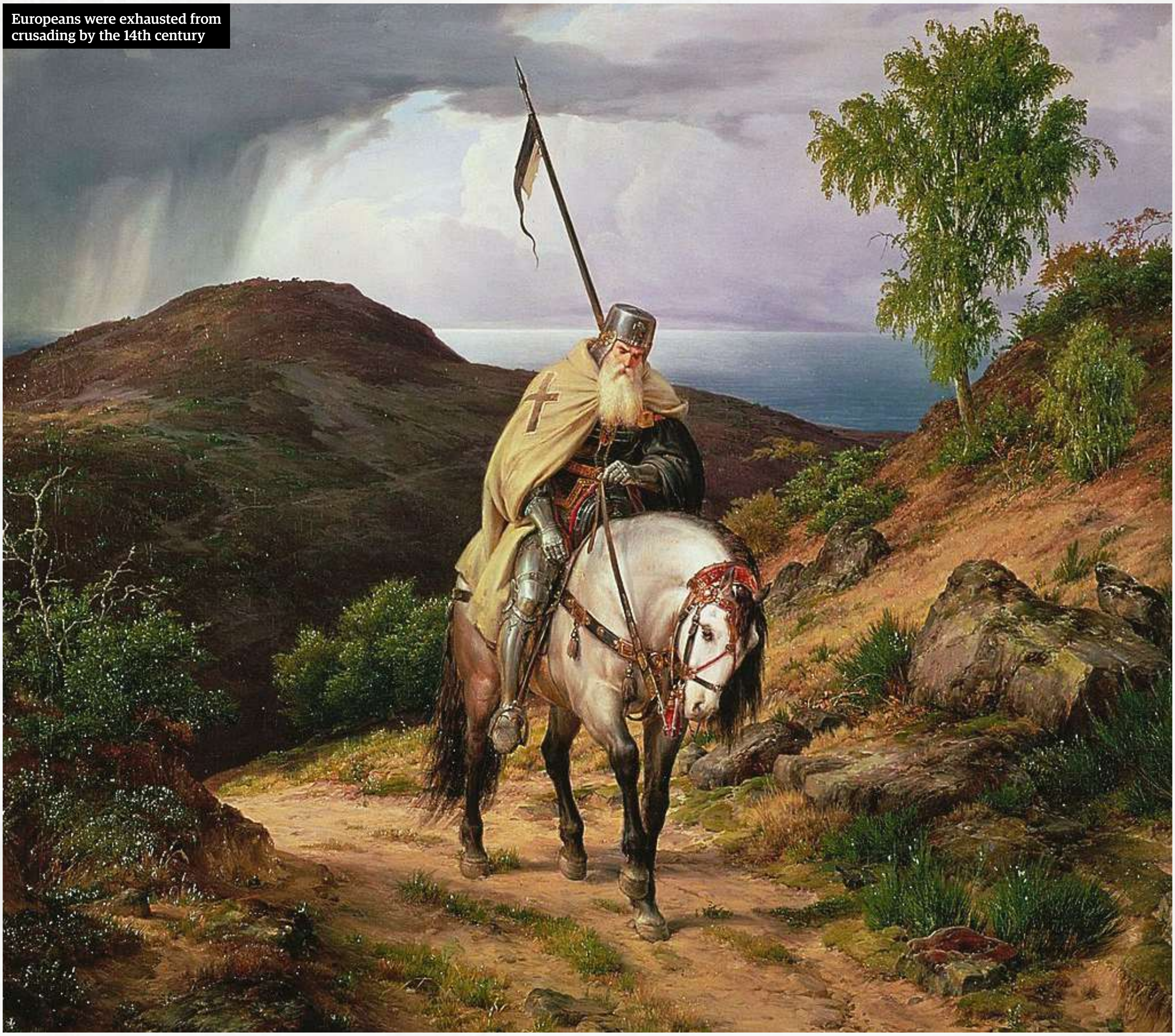
IMAGE SOURCE: GUSTAVE DORÉ

manpower. This ebbing of manpower was also reflected in Crusading spirit.

With the frenzied zeal of the First Crusade never being quite captured again, enthusiasm dwindled over the years. The 'golden age' of Crusading led by King Richard would never be repeated. Monarchs were uneasy about leaving their kingdoms for meaningful lengths of time, much like Philip II abandoning his vows to shore up his holdings in France while Richard was busy trying to capture Jerusalem. The death rattles of the Crusading spirit were finally sounded in the 13th century when the future Edward I of England was forced to return to Europe and leave Outremer to its fate.

With the rise of the powerful Mamluk Caliphate in Egypt, defeat after defeat soon saw the last of the Christian strongholds fall at the turn of the 14th century. The Crusades, which had raged for over 200 years in the Holy Land, were over.

> "THE 'GOLDEN AGE' OF CRUSADING LED BY KING RICHARD WOULD NEVER BE REPEATED"



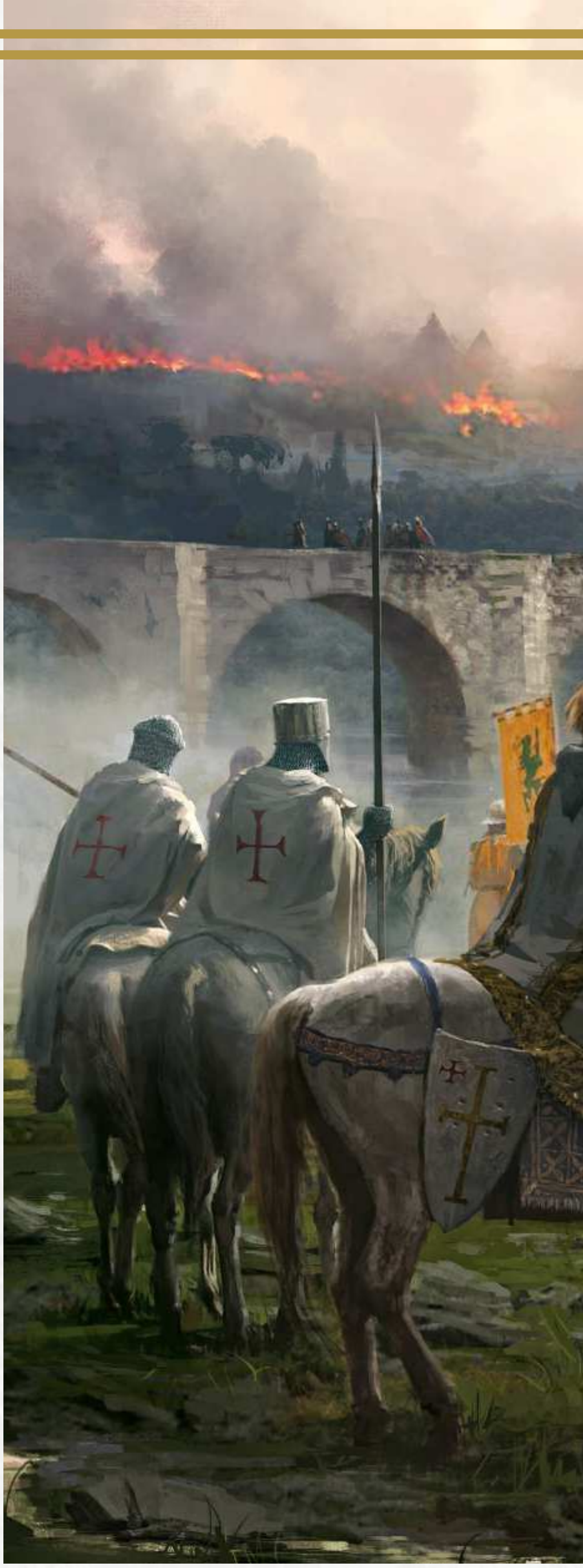
Europeans were exhausted from crusading by the 14th century

IMAGE SOURCE: KARL FRIEDRICH LESSING

FRANCE'S HERETIC WAR

What began as a holy war to end Cathar heresy later became a conflict in which northern France would subjugate the south of the kingdom

Words by Erich B Anderson



On 22 July 1209, a huge Crusader army was encamped outside the city of Béziers in the Languedoc region of southern France. The Crusaders demanded that the townspeople hand over 222 leading Cathar heretics within, or they would all be punished for harbouring the enemies of the Catholic Church. Not only did the citizens of Béziers defiantly refuse to betray their friends, neighbours and family members, but they even mocked the Crusaders from the city walls.

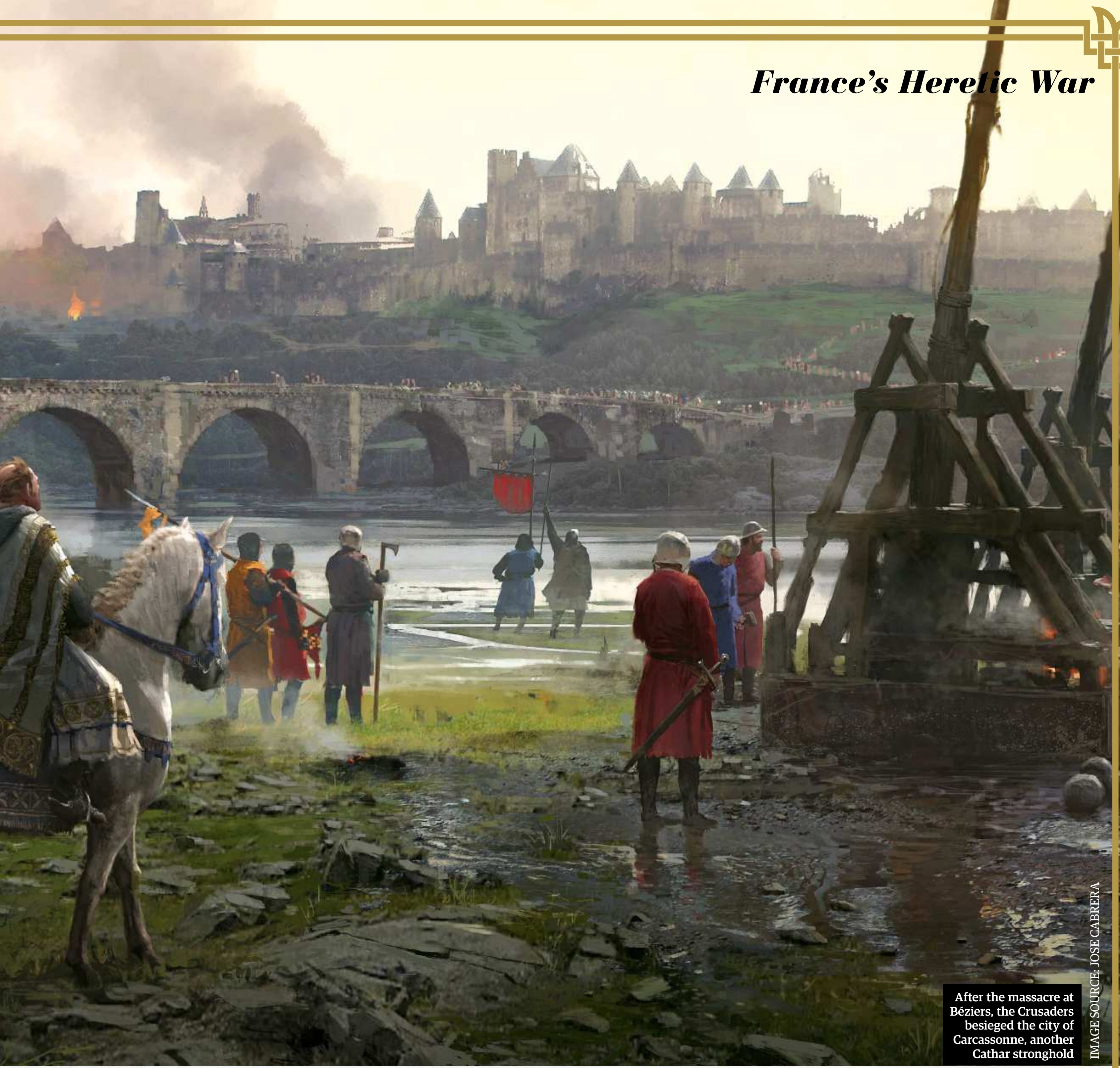
The enemy camp was located on the opposite side of the only bridge that stood over the Orb River adjacent to the city. Leaving the safety of their fortifications, citizens neared the bridge, shooting arrows, throwing stones and shouting insults. The Crusaders closest to the attacks managed to chase them back to the city gate before it could be shut. The guards nearby left their posts on the walls to stop the besiegers from entering the city, but it was too late - the Crusaders flooded Béziers, butchering anyone who attempted to stop them. When some Crusaders asked Arnaud Amalric, the overall commander, how to distinguish between the Catholics and the Cathars, his response was said to have been, "Kill them all! God will know his own." In the end, at least 7,000 were slain in the massacre that followed.

The Albigensian Crusade was the first holy war to be sanctioned by the pope and the Catholic Church against western Europeans. Although a part of the Kingdom of France, the southern inhabitants of the Languedoc region were independent. Not only did the magnates in the area refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Church throughout their lands, but also the language and culture of the region was more similar to northern Spain, making their ties to the Kingdom of Aragon stronger. The division of power between the local aristocracy, clergy and wealthy burghers was an ideal environment for the Cathar 'heresy' to flourish.

"THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE WAS THE FIRST HOLY WAR TO BE SANCTIONED BY THE POPE AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AGAINST WESTERN EUROPEANS"

ROOTS OF HERESY

It is unknown exactly when Catharism reached Languedoc, but what's certain is that it was firmly established in the region by the middle of the 12th century. By the 1170s, Albi had become the



After the massacre at Béziers, the Crusaders besieged the city of Carcassonne, another Cathar stronghold

IMAGE SOURCE: JOSE CABRERA

location of the first Cathar diocese, which is where the title 'Albigensian Crusade' originated.

The Cathars were highly influenced by dualism, which had spread to southern France from eastern Europe and beyond. According to the dualist theology of the Cathars, there were two separate gods, one evil and one good. The benevolent god was the master of the spiritual realm, while the evil one was the overlord of the physical world. A major reason why there was so much animosity between the Cathars and Catholics was because the former group believed that the Church of Rome and its clergy were the main servants of the malicious god on Earth.

Prominent churchmen in Languedoc pleaded for the local Catholic nobility to root out the heresy in their lands, but the magnates of southern France refused. Eventually, Pope Innocent III began to send his legates to the region to preach against the heresy and warned of the dire consequences they would face if they supported the Cathars. After the first legatine missions failed, Peter of Castelnau was sent as the new legate in 1203, but by 1207 he also was not able to end the problem.

Peter then directed his anger towards Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, who had promised Church officials that he would rid his lands of heresy in 1205, but failed to deliver over the following years. After his failure to fulfil his oath and eradicate the heresy, Peter had Raymond removed – it was the third time the count had been condemned by the Church. Even though he had managed to find his way back into its good graces before, Raymond worried his luck would run out, and so he invited the legate to his court for Christmas to discuss every issue. Raymond promised to obey any orders of the Church that Peter gave him.

The meeting was a disaster. The arguments escalated, Raymond threatened to kill Peter, and the legate left the count's home. In the early hours of 14 January 1208, Peter and his entourage were attempting to ford the Rhône River when a man on horseback rode past and struck the legate lethally with his weapon. It was never proven whether Raymond had Peter assassinated, or if he played a part in arranging the murder, but he was accused by many.

Pope Innocent was furious when he heard of his legate's murder. On 10 March, he called for all of Christendom to rise up and end the Cathar threat. In exchange for 40 days of service in the Church's holy war, soldiers were given indulgences that essentially erased all of their sins. Thousands flocked to Lyon to join the Catholic cause and although the warriors came from different European kingdoms, the majority of the recruited soldiers were from northern France. The Albigensian Crusade had begun.

> "IN EXCHANGE FOR JUST 40 DAYS OF SERVICE FIGHTING IN THE CHURCH'S HOLY WAR IN LANGUEDOC, SOLDIERS WERE GIVEN INDULGENCES THAT ESSENTIALLY ERASED ALL OF THEIR SINS"

DEUS VULT?

The Crusaders' first target was the land of the Trencavel family, ruled by Raymond-Roger, viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne and nephew of Count Raymond. After a public display of submission, the Church forgave Raymond, and he proved his Catholic zeal by joining the Crusade. As he and his nephew were not on good terms, he led the Crusaders to the Trencavels' territory so that they would avoid his property.

Following the massacre at Béziers, the army moved towards Carcassonne, which, though smaller than Béziers, had formidable fortifications. Viscount Raymond-Roger, who led the defence, wanted to make a rapid assault on the besiegers with 400 knights. However, one of his trusted commanders advised against it.

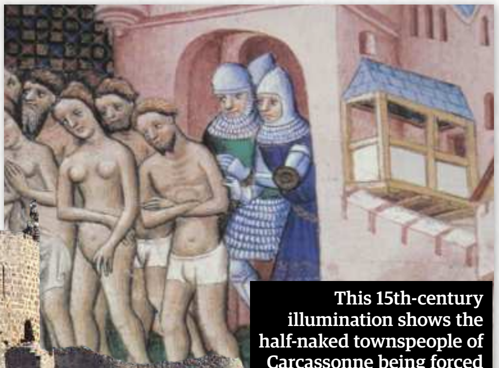
On the morning of 3 August, the Crusaders made their first assault on the suburb of Saint-Vincent. Among their number was Simon de Montfort, a warrior who was instrumental in overcoming the enemy ditches to then seize the suburb after the defenders had fled. Saint-Vincent was won in two hours and razed to the ground so that the Crusaders could move their siege engines into position to strike the fortifications of the city. But the worst part for the defenders was that with the suburb taken, they had lost their main source of water.

The next day, Bourg was attacked. The Crusaders were bombarded with stones, and were repelled by the defenders. De Montfort proved his valour by rescuing a fellow knight with a broken leg while everyone else had fled, except for one brave squire who helped. After the assault failed, the northerners fired upon the walls of Bourg with their siege artillery.

As the siege machines battered Bourg's defences on 4-6 August, King Peter II of Aragon arrived with 100 knights. The Spanish ruler didn't participate, but instead served as a mediator between the northerners and his vassal, Viscount Raymond-Roger. However, King Peter failed to make any impact, so he left in anger as the siege continued. The besiegers had constructed a fortified wagon known as a 'cat' that was covered in ox hides to prevent it from igniting after defenders aimed incendiary weapons at it. The cat enabled engineers among the Crusader forces to move up against the walls of Bourg to undermine its foundations. On 8 August, the sappers

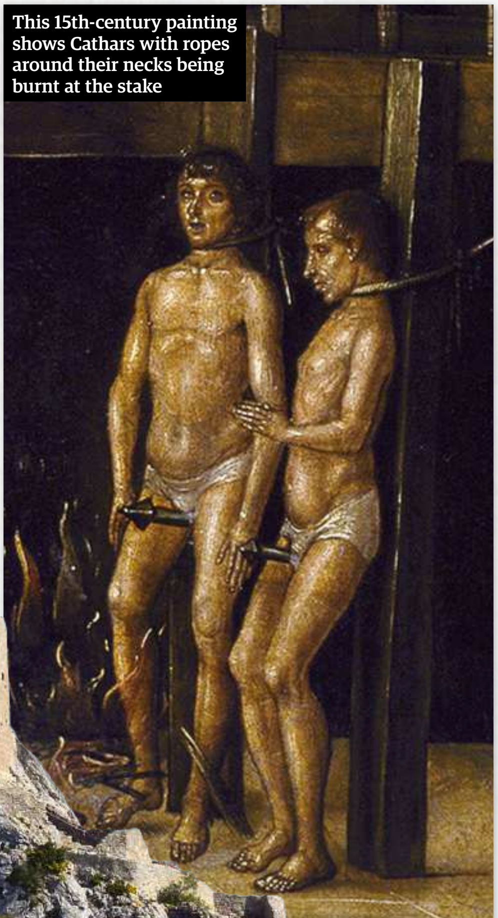
The castle of Quéribus, one of the 'five sons of Carcassonne' that defended the southern border of Languedoc

IMAGE SOURCE: BLUEBREEZEWIKI



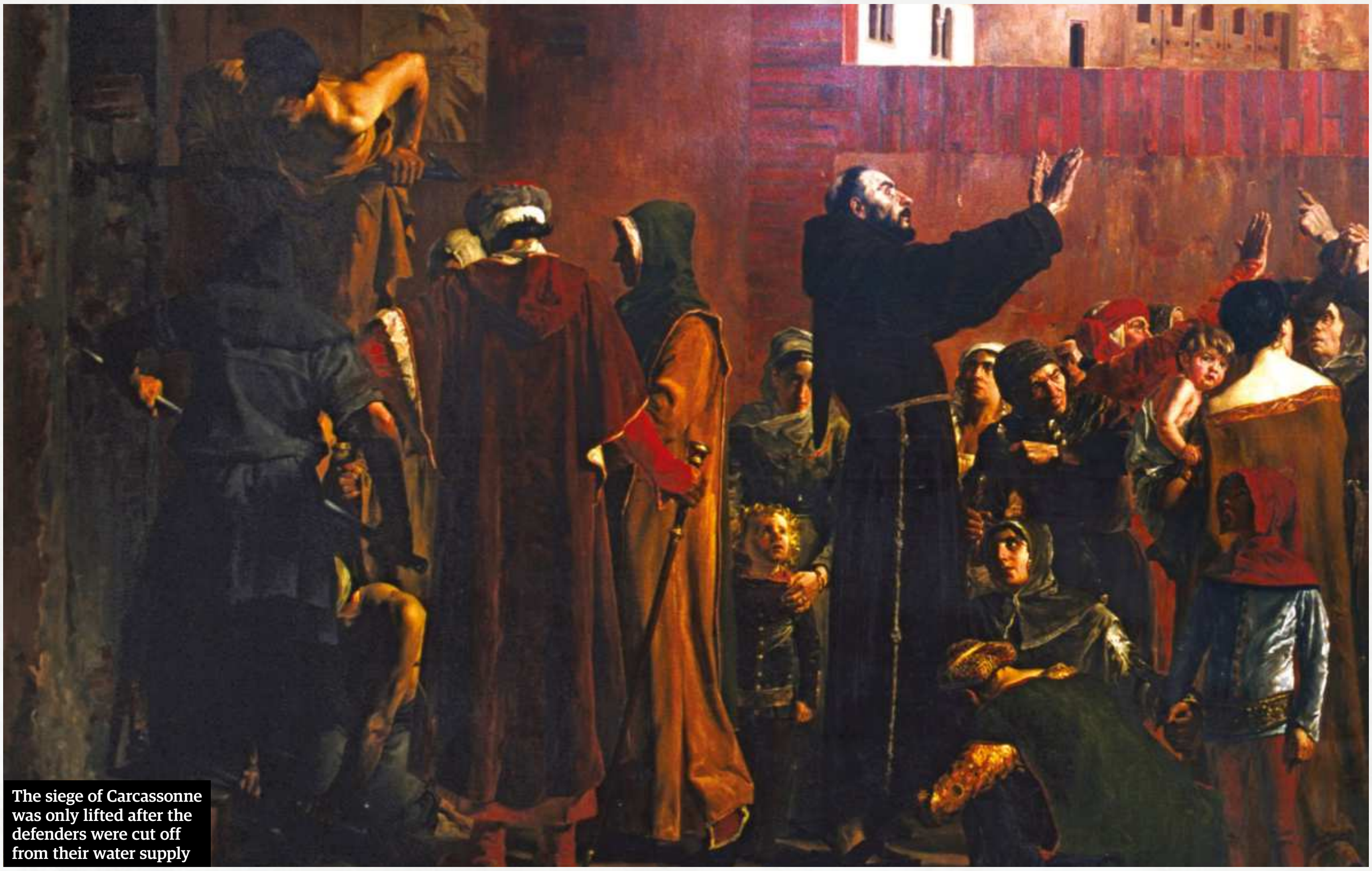
This 15th-century illumination shows the half-naked townspeople of Carcassonne being forced out of the city in 1209

IMAGE SOURCE: WORKSHOP OF MASTER OF BOUCICAUT



This 15th-century painting shows Cathars with ropes around their necks being burnt at the stake

IMAGE SOURCE: PEDRO BERRUGUETE



The siege of Carcassonne was only lifted after the defenders were cut off from their water supply

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES

succeeded in collapsing the wall; the suburb was then swiftly taken and burned.

Cut off from their primary water supply and suffering from poor conditions as a result of overcrowding, Carcassonne surrendered. By 15 August, the viscount was imprisoned and the citizens were forced to abandon the city with none of their possessions while wearing only their undergarments, or no clothing at all.

TOUR OF TERROR

After the defeats at Carcassonne and Béziers, many castles, fortified cities and strongholds throughout the Languedoc region submitted to the Crusaders out of fear. Several other southern fortresses put up resistance, but most were then taken by force. Carcassonne was made the regional headquarters of the Crusader forces and a new leader was chosen – thanks to his reputation as a skilled general and brave warrior, the position was given to de Montfort.

Even though a large number of soldiers had left the army, having fulfilled their promised 40 days of service, de Montfort still managed to seize the fortresses of Minerve, Termes, Cabaret and Lavaur over the next two years. However, the southern resistance was still strong, so when a captured stronghold was lightly garrisoned or considered vulnerable, they fought to take it back at every available opportunity.

Whenever southerners captured Crusaders, they would brutally murder their captives. When northerners were ambushed, every last one would be killed. Late in 1209, two northern knights, taken prisoner by a southern lord, were blinded and had their noses, upper lips and ears cut off. An abbot and his entourage were also assaulted and brutally hacked to death. Then in April 1211, at least 1,500 crusaders were ambushed at Montgey by southern forces who were under the command of the formidable Raymond-Roger, Count of Foix, and were killed.

The brutality of the southerners was in response to the mass murders that continued to be carried out by the northern invaders. When Minerve surrendered in July 1210, 140 Cathars were burned to death. When Lavaur was taken in May 1211, more people were burned alive than at any other point throughout the Crusade. De Montfort used these horrific acts to win the war, and the plan was working for the most part – until he led an army of 4,000 troops to besiege Toulouse on 17 June. Not only was the city too massive to surround, but the 30,000 people within its walls vastly outnumbered his forces. Ten days later, the Crusaders were forced to abandon the siege.

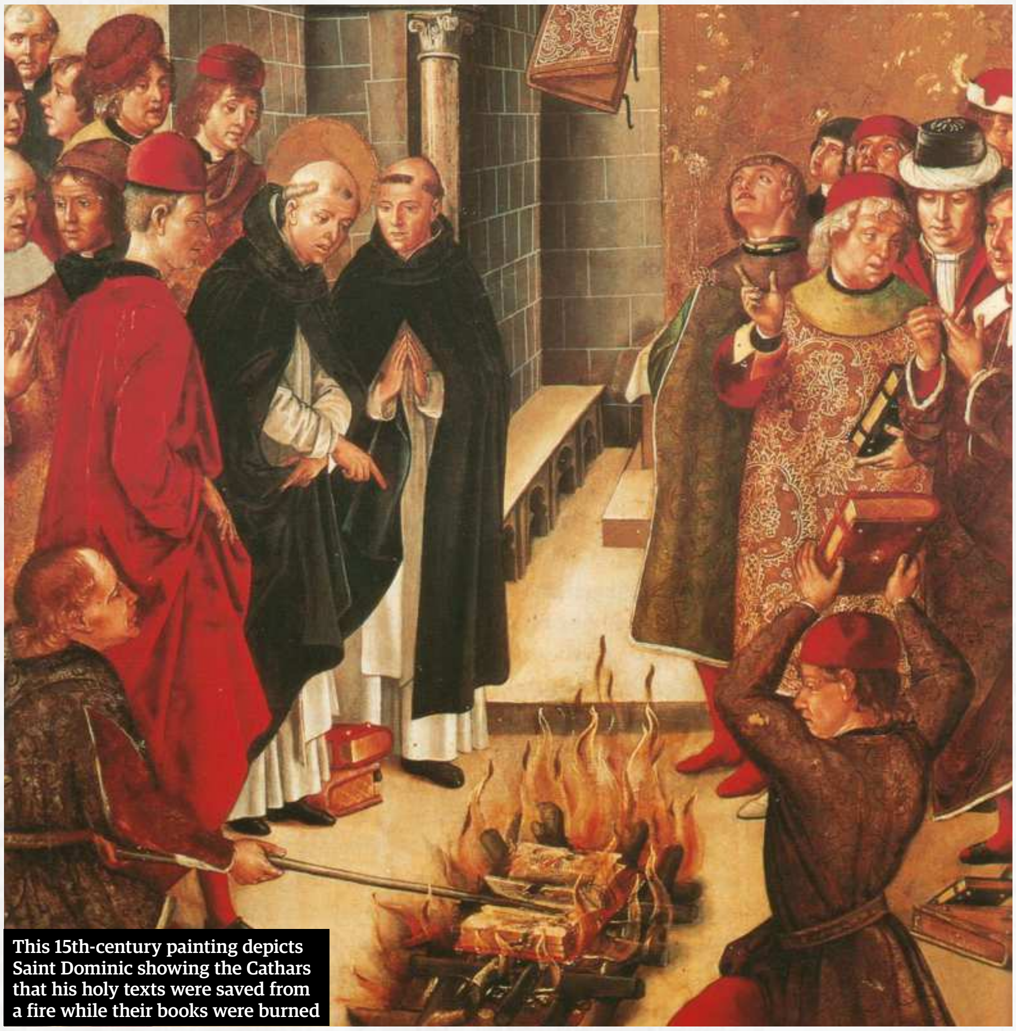
Later, Toulouse, allied with Foix and two southern magnates, raised a force of 1,000-2,000 men. At the Battle of Castelnaudary, the southern

THE DEATH OF DE MONTFORT

By the summer of 1218, Simon de Montfort and his northern forces still had not captured Toulouse by siege. Since the Crusader army could not completely surround the huge fortified city, southern troops continued to arrive to help the defenders. Conversely, de Montfort was struggling to pay his mercenaries, so tensions remained high in the crusader camp.

Desperate to overcome the city's defences, de Montfort ordered his men to construct a huge siege tower that could fit 400 knights and 150 archers. The defenders knew the siege engine was extremely dangerous, so they planned to make a sortie and assault the belfry on 25 June. In response, de Montfort and his brother Guy led a group of mounted knights to repel the attack on their prized siege tower. The Crusaders tried to stay upon their steeds, but a vicious volley of crossbow bolts and artillery missiles made it incredibly difficult to remain mounted. Guy's horse was slain by a bolt to the head, and the rider was also struck in the groin. De Montfort was even hit by five arrows that caused minor wounds.

According to one source, a group of noblewomen and their daughters shot a stone from a mangonel that caused considerable damage to the Crusader cause. The anonymous writer of the latter part of the *Song of the Cathar Wars*s claims the stone "struck Count Simon on his steel helmet, shattering his eyes, brains, back teeth, forehead and jaw. Bleeding and black, the count dropped dead on the ground."



This 15th-century painting depicts Saint Dominic showing the Cathars that his holy texts were saved from a fire while their books were burned

IMAGE SOURCE: PEDRO BERRUGUETE

army faced 700 Crusaders but was still defeated by de Montfort. However, despite being beaten, the southerners of Languedoc continued to unite as the conflict became more of a war between north and south.

From the end of 1211 to 1213, a grinding guerrilla war ensued over the control of the numerous strongholds in the region. Most fortresses lost by the southerners fell back into their possession when the defenders within betrayed the Crusaders – many never intended to break their original pledges of loyalty in the first place. However, the first major gain for the southern resistance came when its forces successfully stormed Le Pujol in May 1213.

This momentum stayed with the southerners in 1213, as Raymond finally convinced King Peter to intervene on behalf of his vassals in Languedoc. With the Spanish troops, the southern army increased to 2,000-4,000 cavalry and thousands of infantry. On 10 September, they reached Muret and put it under siege. It did not take long before de Montfort arrived with a relief force of 800-1,000 cavalry and 700 infantry. The two armies faced each other on 12 September – Peter led the army from the centre, while Foix commanded the vanguard, with de Montfort leading his Crusaders from the rearguard.

At first, the northern centre and van slammed into the southern allied army as de Montfort held the rearguard back in reserve and watched, waiting for the most opportune time to strike. After the Crusaders penetrated deep into the southern ranks, their general saw how vulnerable the left flank under Raymond-Roger was and made his assault.

Meanwhile, Peter was in dire straits as fierce combat had engulfed his entire outfit. Many of his noble warriors had perished and the king was in a fight for his life. Peter was then mortally wounded and died on the battlefield surrounded by his foremost warriors. Once the king was killed, the southern army panicked and fled the field. The number of casualties is unknown, but the south certainly suffered severe losses.

THE ULTIMATE DEFEAT

After the defeat at Muret, the south hadn't given up, but many more towns and strongholds submitted to the Crusaders. Throughout 1214, violent conflicts decreased. The pope officially ended the crusade by 1215 after Raymond, Raymond-Roger and the other leading nobles of Languedoc had reconciled themselves with the Church. But the war between northern France and the south wasn't over.

A MEDIEVAL GUERRILLA WAR

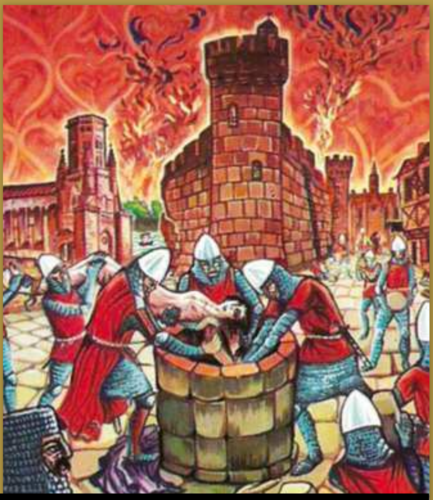
Throughout the conflict, numerous atrocities were committed by both sides. Due to the extensive knowledge of the terrain, the southerners ambushed the Crusaders as much as possible. After winning several of these surprise attacks on the northerners, the captive Crusaders were often mutilated or butchered regardless of their social status.

However, since the fighting occurred predominately in the south, there were considerably more innocents slain among the southerners, who were either burned or slaughtered after their city was taken with no regard as to whether they were Cathar or Catholic.

One of the most brutal acts of the crusade was carried out by the northerners after a large contingent of their comrades was ambushed and completely annihilated near Montgey at the end of April 1211. In retaliation, once the Crusaders had taken the fortress of Lavaur on 3 May, Simon de Montfort ordered his men to throw Giralda, the Lady of Lavaur, into a well and then drop rocks on top of her until she was crushed to death. Additionally, Lord Aimery de Montréal was hung and 80 knights were slain.

For the Cathars in the stronghold, a huge fire was made in a meadow and 300-400 of the heretics were burned alive in the massive blaze. Unlike at Béziers, the Catholic non-combatants within the city were allowed to live as long as they handed over a substantial amount of their goods and wealth to the Crusaders.

> "THE CAPTIVE CRUSADERS WERE OFTEN MUTILATED OR BUTCHERED REGARDLESS OF THEIR SOCIAL STATUS"



A depiction of Lady Giralda bound up and about to be thrown into the well while the stones that would later crush her are shown piled beside it

IMAGE SOURCE: QUINTILLA Y CARDONA, HISTOIRE DU CATHARISME

Since the southerners could no longer look to King Peter for protection, de Montfort was determined to win the independent Languedoc for his lord, the king of France. In May, the northern ruler sent his son, Prince Louis, with a large army to join de Montfort's forces. When the northern army arrived at Toulouse, the citizens opened the city gates to them without any resistance. The northerners then destroyed much of the city's fortifications and even separated the Château Narbonnais, Raymond's former castle, from the city walls. Despite his reconciliation with the pope, Raymond also lost all of his titles and territory, including Toulouse, to de Montfort.

Cathars rejected the idea of priesthood and they didn't use church buildings in their worship

The people of Languedoc had been severely wounded, but not defeated. Even though de Montfort had gained control, his access to manpower had been drastically limited because of the 40-day terms most soldiers still served - he had to rely primarily upon mercenaries and struggled to find the funds necessary to keep them. The count of Toulouse's son, Raymond VII, exploited his vulnerability and won back the town of Beaucaire in the winter of 1216.

In July of that year, the southerners had received more good news: Pope Innocent III was finally dead. Reports reached de Montfort, warning that Toulouse would soon rebel, so he returned to the city to sack it. The defences were destroyed, hostages were taken, and de Montfort demanded a large amount of money from its citizens. In 1217, he left Toulouse to deal with other rebellious parts of the region, leaving behind a small garrison and most of his family in the Château Narbonnais.

With de Montfort gone, Raymond VI travelled to Toulouse and used the cover of a thick fog to secretly enter the city with a small army of knights and dispossessed nobles on 13 September 1217. The Toulousians rejoiced at the return of their count and immediately began to slay the foreign soldiers within their city. Those who managed to escape fled to the Château Narbonnais. Then every man, woman and child within Toulouse helped to prepare for the siege that was inevitably coming, rebuilding walls, digging new ditches and constructing new barricades to keep the invaders out.

Upon his arrival, de Montfort led an assault against the weakest section at the Montolieu Gate. As before in his first siege of Toulouse, de Montfort didn't have a sufficient amount of men to surround the city, so his primary plan of action was to attack the weakest points: the Montolieu Gate being one of them. But the defenders were ready - archers and crossbowmen lined the walls, supported by mangonels, which all launched a barrage of missiles down upon the besiegers. The missile fire was so intense that de Montfort's forces could barely reach the ditch in front of the gate before they had to retreat. De Montfort's younger son was severely wounded from a crossbow bolt to the chest.

The siege continued for weeks, with de Montfort's assaults being constantly beaten back. The defenders left the city to raid the northerners' camp, but were repelled without causing serious damage. By December, they hadn't managed to break into the city, so they enlisted more soldiers. Months later, a large number of northern French warriors were persuaded to help their cause. But even with reinforcements, de Montfort was still unable to take Toulouse.

The war over control of Languedoc changed considerably on 25 June when de Montfort was killed by a mangonel missile to the head. With the leader of the Crusaders dead, the siege of Toulouse ended on 25 July. De Montfort's eldest son, Amaury, inherited his father's possessions, but not his brutality or relentlessness.

Although the conflict would continue for decades, de Montfort's death encouraged many nobles in Languedoc to reclaim their lost territory and titles. The morale of the southerners increased further in the spring of 1219, when they defeated a northern army at the Battle of Baziége, slaughtering the invaders as they had at Montgey years earlier.

The high confidence of the people of Languedoc did not last long. After de Montfort's death, the king of France and his son, Louis, began to play a much larger role in the conflict, transforming the war into a fight for the subjugation of the south. Once the prince ascended the throne, he made the conquest of Languedoc a top priority. The south could not withstand the might of the north, and by 1229, most of Languedoc had submitted. However, it was not until 1244 that the last bastions of revolt were put down, and the threat of the Cathar heresy, as well as southern independence, was finally crushed.

"MANY OF HIS NOBLE WARRIORS HAD PERISHED AND THE KING WAS IN A FIGHT FOR HIS LIFE"

Statue of Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, located in the Salle des Illustres in Toulouse

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES

THE SPANISH INQUISITION

The infamous institution's beginnings and how it gained its bloodthirsty reputation

Words by Jon Wright

Tudor martyrologist John Foxe, the "cruel and barbarous Inquisition of Spain", was a mire of inexcusable atrocities. Prisoners would be held "in darkness palpable, in horrors infinite, in fear miserable, wrestling with the assaults of death". There was no end to the "injuries, threats, whippings and scourgings, tortures and racks", but the secrecy of the institution was equally offensive to Foxe. "All the proceedings of the court of that execrable Inquisition [are] open to no man, but all is done in a hugger-mugger, and in close corners… by covert ways and secret counsels."

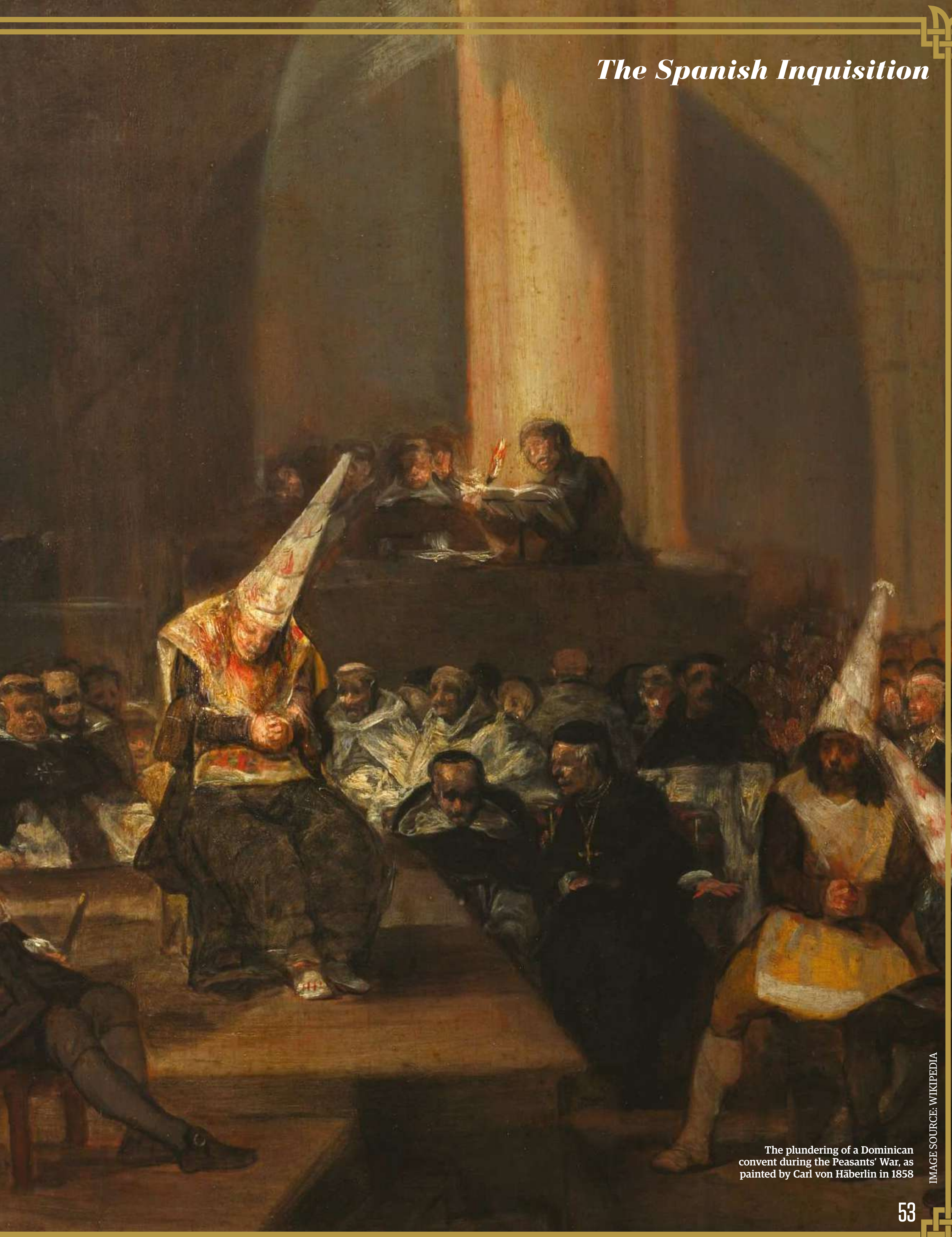
This is the image of the Spanish Inquisition that has held sway for centuries and which remains in the popular historical imagination. Of late, however, scholars have sought to provide a more nuanced understanding: not to excuse the Inquisition's many excesses, but to place its activities in context. Sad to say, the methods and goals of the Spanish Inquisition were par for the course in early modern Europe. Torture was applied, though far less often than one might expect, but the same could be said of tribunals and secular and religious engines of justice across the continent. People were killed, though fewer than the sensationalist accounts suggest, but the notion of despatching stubborn heretics was normal in this period and on both sides of the confessional divide. As horrible as the Spanish Inquisition undoubtedly was, the "black legend" of a uniquely vicious enterprise does not hold up to scrutiny.

For all that, it is still seen as a stain on the reputation of the monarchs who founded it: Isabella of Castile and her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon. This is, to an extent, understandable, because the Inquisition was certainly at its most menacing during its earliest decades. It has been calculated that three-quarters of those killed over the course of the institution's history, which stretched all the way to 1834, perished in the first 50 years.

There is much to admire about Isabella of Castile. She was a woman who lavished patronage on arts and letters, who could balance private austerity with public appearances in posh frocks and gleaming jewels and who, so the story goes, hunted down a sizeable bear. But the founding of the Spanish Inquisition can look a lot like a blot. Why, then, did she consent to it? Politics were every bit as important as faith. When Isabella ascended to the throne in 1474, she had a chaotic past and an uncertain future to confront. The Inquisition was one very useful tool of self-assertion.

During her early years, no one really expected the daughter of John II to become queen. She had two

"TORTURE WAS APPLIED, THOUGH FAR LESS OFTEN THAN ONE MIGHT EXPECT"



The plundering of a Dominican convent during the Peasants' War, as painted by Carl von Häberlin in 1858

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

brothers, Henry and Alfonso, ahead of her in the line of succession. The former duly became Henry IV of Castile in 1454, but his reign was blighted - largely due to his incompetence - by revolt, factionalism and discontent. When Henry's wife, Joan of Portugal, had a daughter called Joanna in 1462, rumours of the child's illegitimacy travelled far and wide. For many, Alfonso was a far more suitable candidate as a successor and, after his hand was forced, Henry named him as such.

When Alfonso died in 1468, Isabella's prospects were transformed. She had no truck with plans to supplant Henry on the throne and was named heir, but relations with her half-brother soured over the issue of her marriage. Henry had sought, on various occasions, to match her with a suitable husband, but Isabella plumped for Ferdinand of Aragon - a man, as one chronicler put it, "of good effort and much activity in war". Against Henry's wishes, the pair married, and relations between the half-siblings never recovered.

In December 1474, immediately after Henry's death, Isabella was to be found proceeding to her coronation in Segovia. Ahead of her, someone carried "an unsheathed sword so as to demonstrate to all how it was apt for her to punish and chastise wrongdoers". It would prove to be necessary. Regardless of the claims of illegitimacy, Joanna insisted that she was Henry's daughter and direct heir. She also had a formidable champion, Afonso V of Portugal, to whom she was betrothed. For the next five years, conflict raged. Isabella emerged triumphant, Joanna lived out her days in the confinement of a monastery, and in 1479 the security of Isabella's rule was greatly enhanced by her husband's accession to the throne of Aragon.

These, though, were not events to be quickly forgotten, and the joint monarchs' obsession with asserting their power defined their rule. Many strategies were available. Isabella was positioned as the woman who would rescue Castile from shipwreck. She was the shepherdess, an eagle and even comparable to the Blessed Virgin Mary. As one sycophant gushed, "Just as our Lord wished that our glorious Lady might be born in this world because from her would proceed the universal redeemer of the human lineage, so he determined that you, my lady, would be born to reform and restore these kingdoms and lead them out from the tyrannical government under which they have been for so long."

Ferdinand was by her side and he was a welcome contrast to the feeble Henry who, so the gossipers never tired of suggesting, had been impotent in every sense. Bluster only got you so far, however, so Ferdinand and Isabella worked hard to curb the powers of troublesome nobles, to reorganise the machinery of government and, crucially, to complete one matter of urgent geopolitical business.

After a 12-year Crusade, the Muslim kingdom of Granada was finally conquered in 1492 and, for contemporaries, proofs of legitimacy and divine approval of the regime did not come much better than that. Religious unity - or at least the containment of religious diversity - was a crucial part of this project. Isabella's faith was deep and sincere, but she also saw the political advantages of a muscular Roman Catholicism: inquisitions were its embodiment.

The concept of an inquisition was nothing new. During the Medieval era, temporary local tribunals had been established to cope with outbursts of heresy - notably to combat the Cathar threat in 13th-century France. But when Ferdinand and Isabella petitioned Pope Sixtus V in 1478, they made a groundbreaking demand: their proposed inquisition was to be under direct royal control. With papal approval secured, the first tribunal began its work in Seville in 1480, with additional bodies quickly springing up in Jaén, Córdoba and

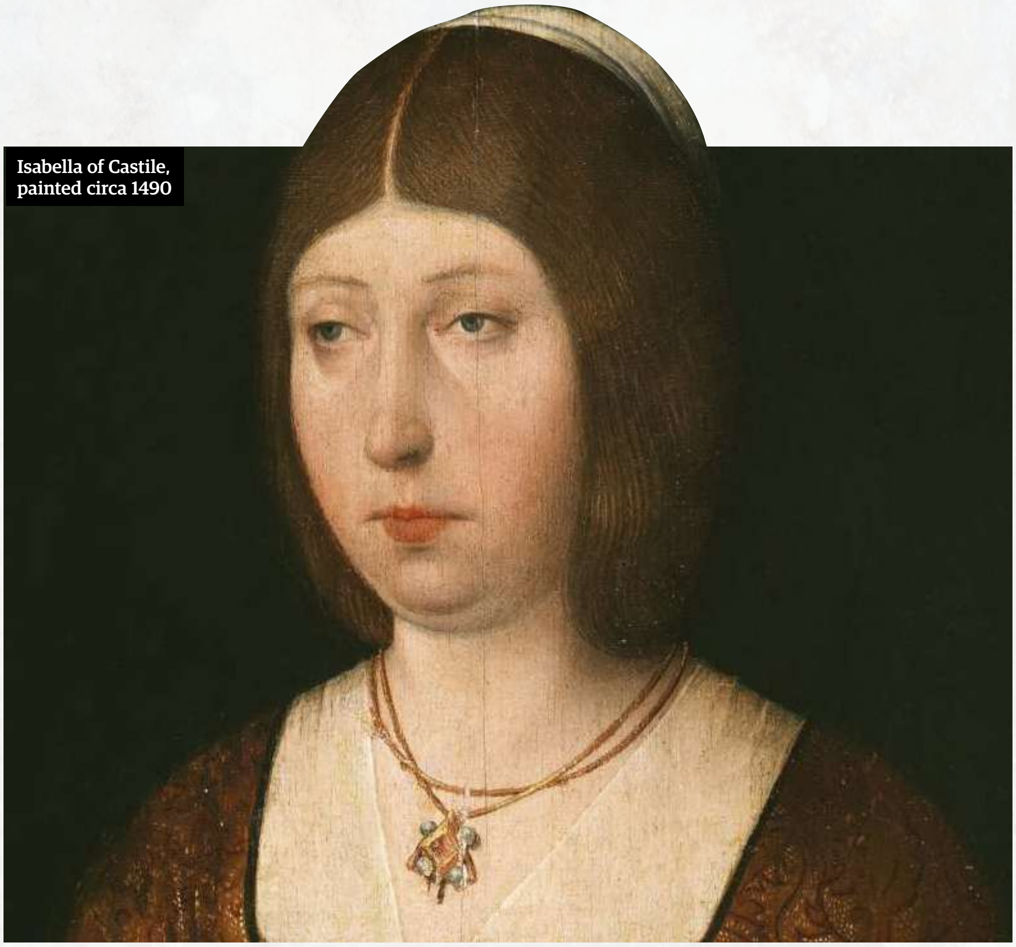

Isabella of Castile, painted circa 1490

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

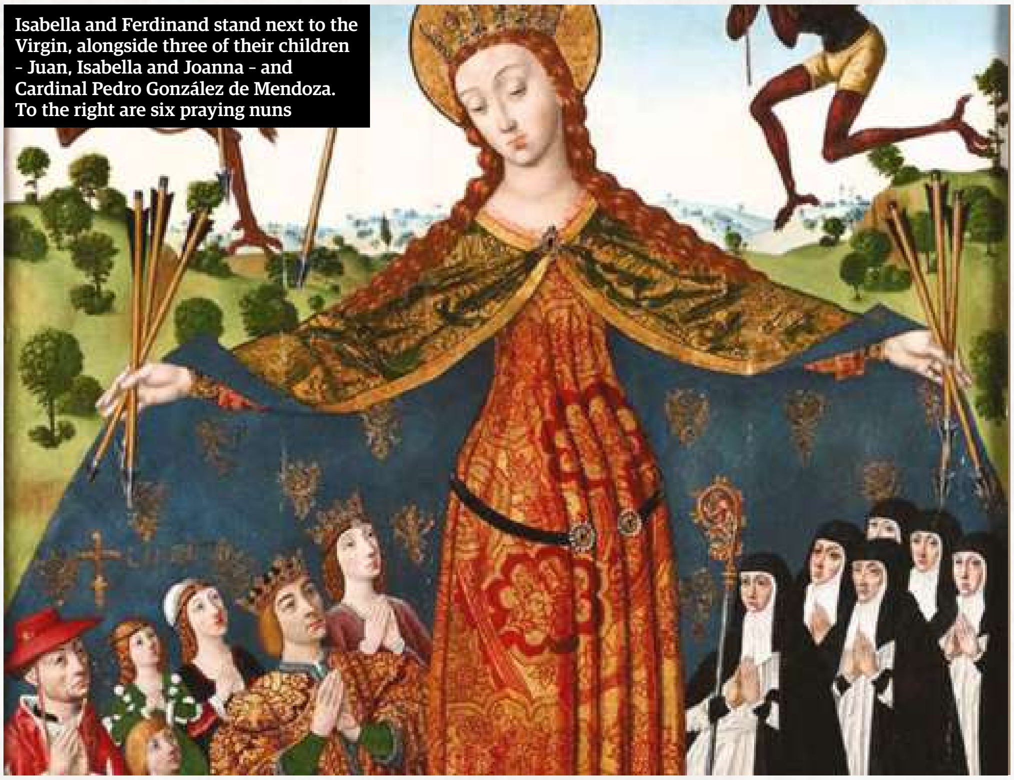
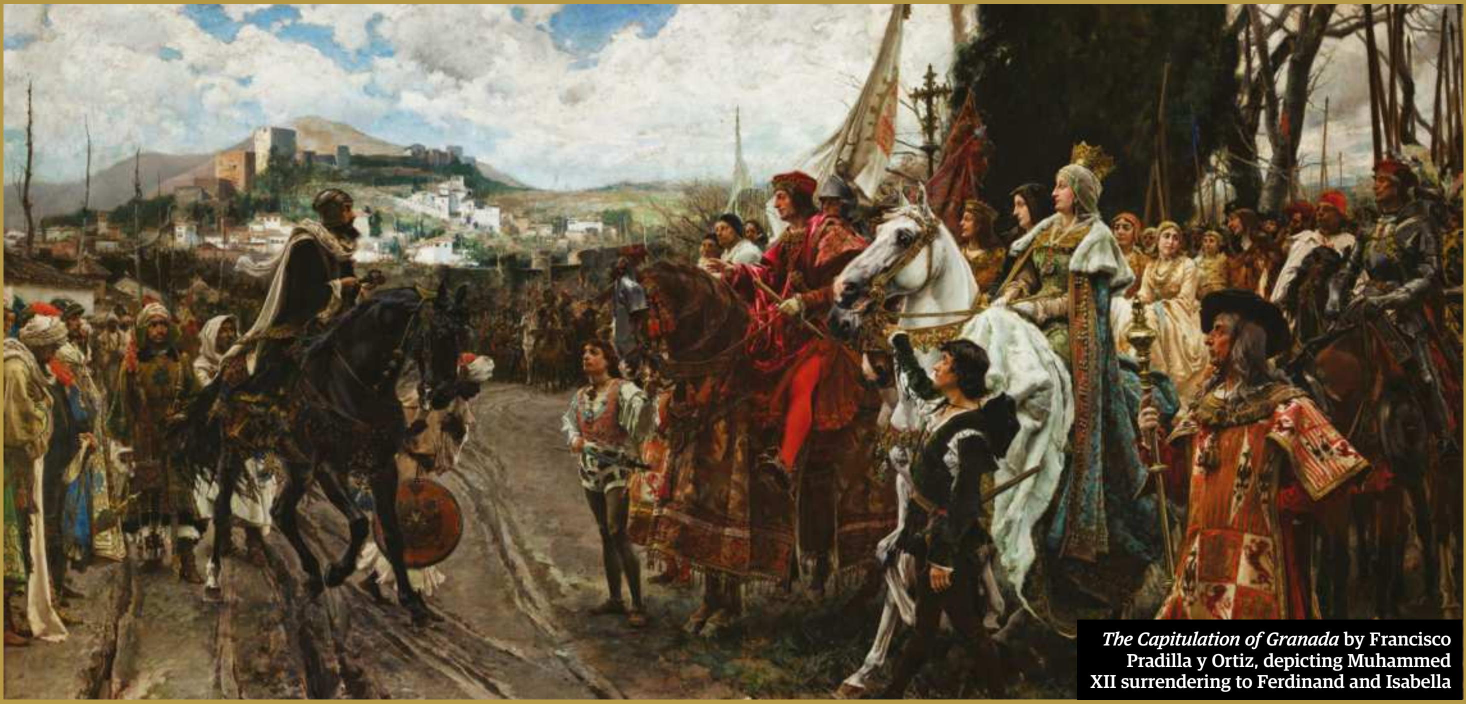

Isabella and Ferdinand stand next to the Virgin, alongside three of their children - Juan, Isabella and Joanna - and Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza. To the right are six praying nuns

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

IBERIAN ISLAM

How Isabella finally removed the thorn of Granada from Castile's side



The Capitulation of Granada by Francisco Pradilla y Ortiz, depicting Muhammed XII surrendering to Ferdinand and Isabella

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

The goal of achieving religious uniformity also had an epochal impact on Spain's Muslim population. Medieval Iberia had been home to a thriving Islamic culture but, by the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, only the emirate of Granada survived. It had long been the ambition of Castilian kings to expunge it, but conquest was only achieved in 1492.

At first, by the treaty of surrender, Muslims were promised that they would be allowed to maintain their customs and religious practices. Conversion efforts were made by the first archbishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera, but were limited to gentle persuasion, such as the preaching of sermons in Arabic. By 1499, with the lack of meaningful evangelical success, harsher measures, including forced baptisms and the conversion of mosques into churches, were deployed. In 1502, all Muslims in Castile were made to chose between baptism or expulsion - a ruling that had spread across the entire peninsula by 1526.

Those who chose to formally adopt the Christian faith would be termed 'moriscos' and, like the conversos of Jewish origin before them, they would become the focus of suspicion and hostility. Great efforts were indeed made by many moriscos to sustain their true religious identity and, during the first half of the 16th century, they were occasionally brought before the Inquisition. At times, the search for supposed signs of Islamic sympathy reached almost comical levels. In 1538, a morisco in Toledo found himself in trouble for no more than "dancing the zambra and eating couscous". Between 1568 and 1570, the moriscos of Granada rose up, unsucessfully, against Philip II. The Granadan population was forcibly scattered across Spain and moriscos became much more frequent targets of the Inquisition.

Between 1570 and the early 17th century, a majority of those facing the Inquisition in Aragon, Valencia and Granada were moriscos. Calls mounted to expel the moriscos from Spain and, in 1609, the axe fell. Somewhere in the region of 300,000 people were forced to leave their homeland. Cardinal Richelieu declared it the "most barbarous act in human annals".

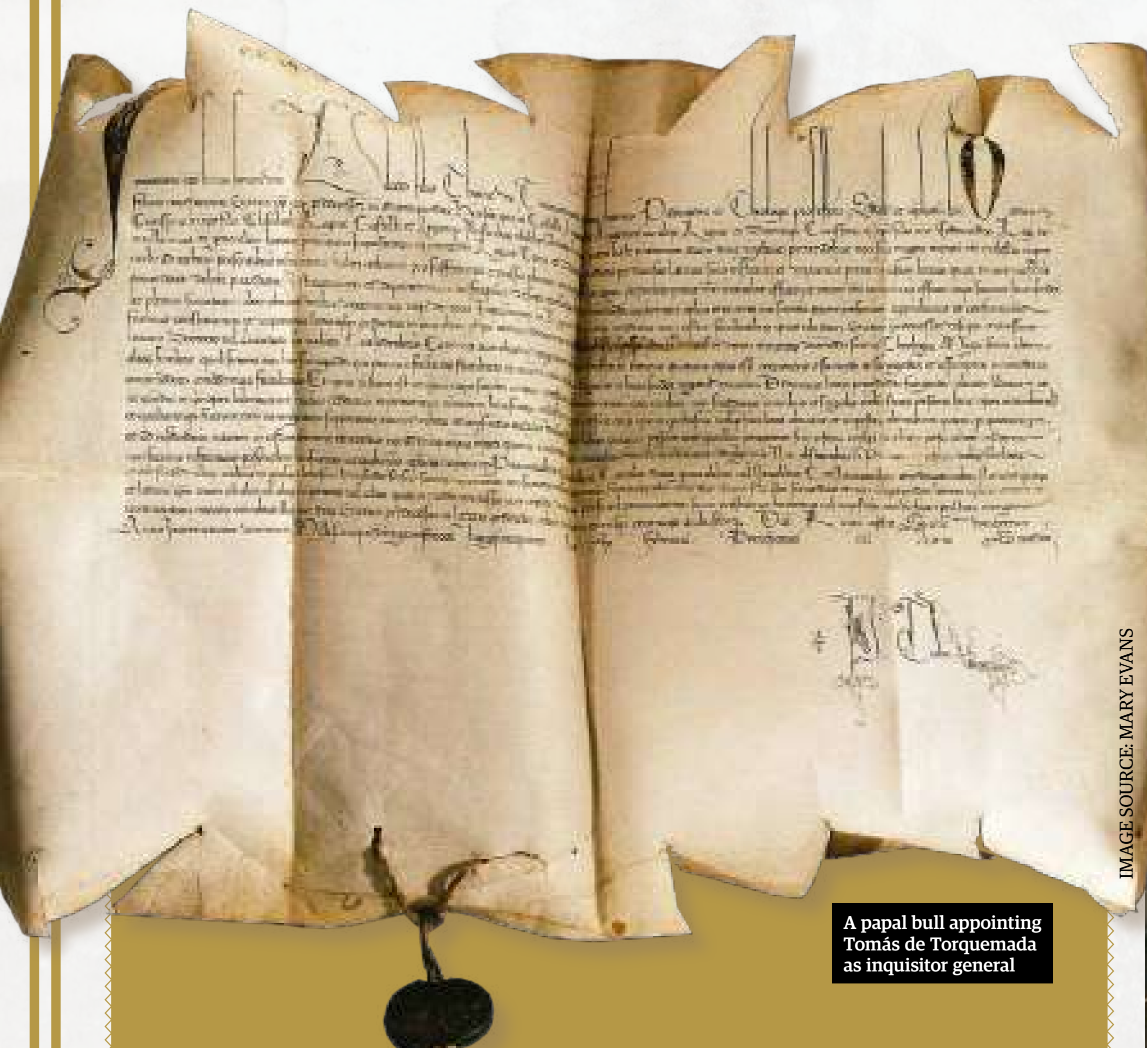
Ciudad Real. The experiment was extended to Aragon and other provinces and, in line with the monarchs' policy of streamlining and centralising governance, a special royal council for the Spanish Inquisition was established with an inquisitor general at its head.

Later in its history, the Spanish Inquisition would pursue witches, Protestants and all manner of other perceived threats, but at the outset it was focused on one group: the so-called 'conversos'. Through pressures of threat and persecution, large numbers of Jewish Spaniards had converted to Christianity, but they and their descendants always endured suspicion.

It was suggested that some continued to maintain Jewish beliefs, follow Jewish rituals and observances in private and surreptitiously spread their faith. As the Inquisition-seeking letter to the pope put it in 1478, "Be advised that we have taken note that in our kingdoms and domains there have been and are certain Christians, apostates, heretics and conversos who, despite receiving the sacrament of baptism and being baptised, and having the name of Christians, have turned and converted, and continue to turn and convert, to the sect, superstitions, and faithlessness of the Jews."

One of the leading historians of the Inquisition, Henry Kamen, has described the campaign against the conversos as "an exaggerated product of the clerical imagination", and, crucially, it had as much to do with socio-economic factors as religious ones. Many converso families had made great strides within Spanish society, and their influence

"THE JOINT MONARCHS' OBSESSION WITH ASSERTING THEIR POWER DEFINED THEIR RULE"



A papal bull appointing Tomás de Torquemada as inquisitor general

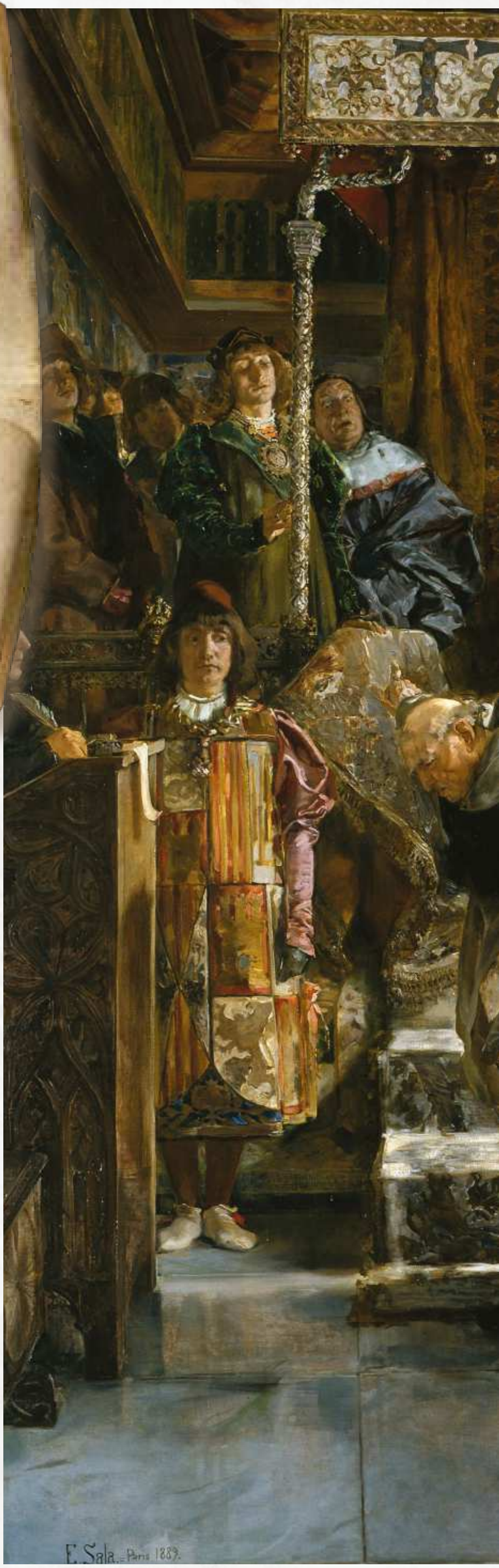

E. Sala. Paris 1889.

IMAGE SOURCE: MARY EVANS

THE FIRST INQUISITOR GENERAL

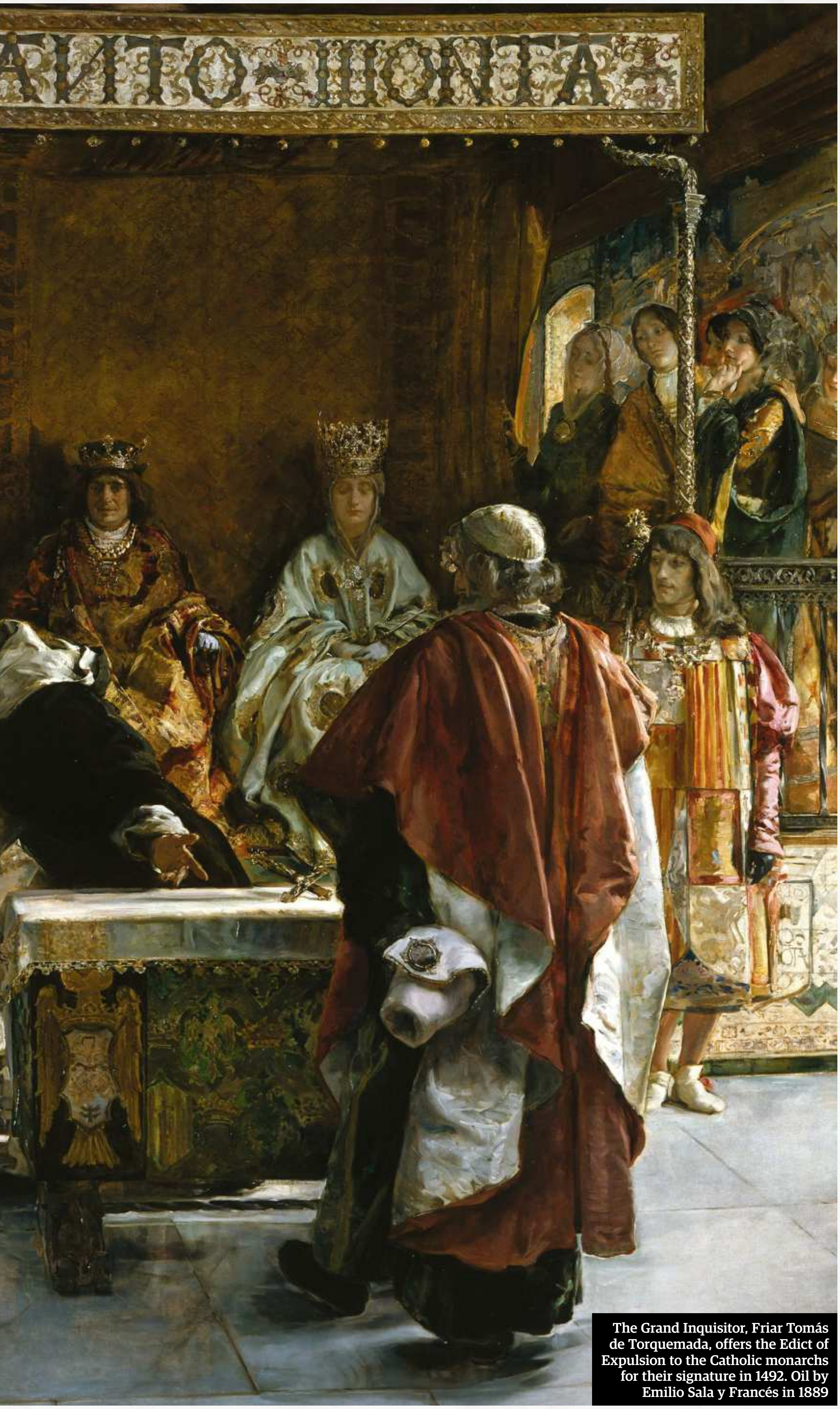
Discover the friar who led the Spanish Inquisition at the very beginning

Born in 1420, Tomás de Torquemada was Spain's first inquisitor general, a position he held until his death in 1498. His headship of the royal council for the Inquisition, the Suprema, granted him considerable, though not limitless, powers over tribunals across the peninsula. Torquemada was never allowed to forget that he was a royal servant, and Ferdinand especially missed few opportunities to instruct him on how to conduct his business. One letter from 1486 shows the king instructing him on the trivial issue of how much to pay the Inquisition's doorkeepers.

A Dominican of austere habits (he shunned meat, for instance), Torquemada had been a royal confessor and appears to have taken to his new role with gusto. He clearly possessed a strong animus against Judaism and any variety of heretical dissent. He had burned Jewish books while at his monastery in Salamanca and showed a marked commitment to completing the Jewish expulsion of 1492.

For all his influence, Torquemada oversaw an inquisitorial network in which local initiative often trumped centralised directives. One way to alleviate this problem was through the issuing of 'instructions', which provided basic rules to be followed by all tribunals. Inquisitors were told how to present themselves to municipal authorities, which subordinates to employ and how to announce their arrival to local populations.

Some of Torquemada's rubrics were decidedly harsh. He ordered, for example, that even the children and grandchildren of those condemned by the Inquisition should be prevented from taking up a staggering range of roles and public offices. The list of forbidden occupations included "judges, mayors, constables, magistrates, jurors, stewards, officials of weights and measures, merchants, notaries, public clerks, lawyers, attorneys, secretaries, accountants, treasurers, physicians, surgeons, shopkeepers, brokers [and] tax-farmers." There is surprisingly little evidence that allows us to pin down Torquemada's theological opinions, and portrayals of him, especially in historical fiction, have tended towards caricature. Still, it is not too hard to believe the accusation, laid before a local Inquisition tribunal in 1490, that one Jewish convert to Christianity had referred to Torquemada as "the most accursed man in the world".



The Grand Inquisitor, Friar Tomás de Torquemada, offers the Edict of Expulsion to the Catholic monarchs for their signature in 1492. Oil by Emilio Sala y Francés in 1889

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

and success were resented. It is also apparent that many converso victims of the Inquisition came from elite groups that had supported Isabella and Ferdinand's rivals.

In any event, the monarchs appear to have been convinced that concerted action was a necessary policy. It was certainly this unfortunate group that bore the brunt of the Inquisition's earliest intrusions. In Catalonia, for example, 1,199 people were brought to trial between 1488 and 1505: all but eight of them were conversos.

But how did these tribunals operate? Contrary to Monty Python, people always expected the Spanish Inquisition – the arrival of inquisitors was announced well in advance, and sermons would provide information on the kinds of behaviour that would be investigated. Typically, a tribunal would be headed by two inquisitors, supported by various officials, including a constable, to make arrests, with theological advisers and laymen, known as familiares, in subsidiary roles. Especially in the first decades, an edict of grace would be issued. This gave a specific amount of time – ranging from a few weeks to several months – in which people could voluntarily confess and seek reconciliation or report others who they suspected of errant activities.

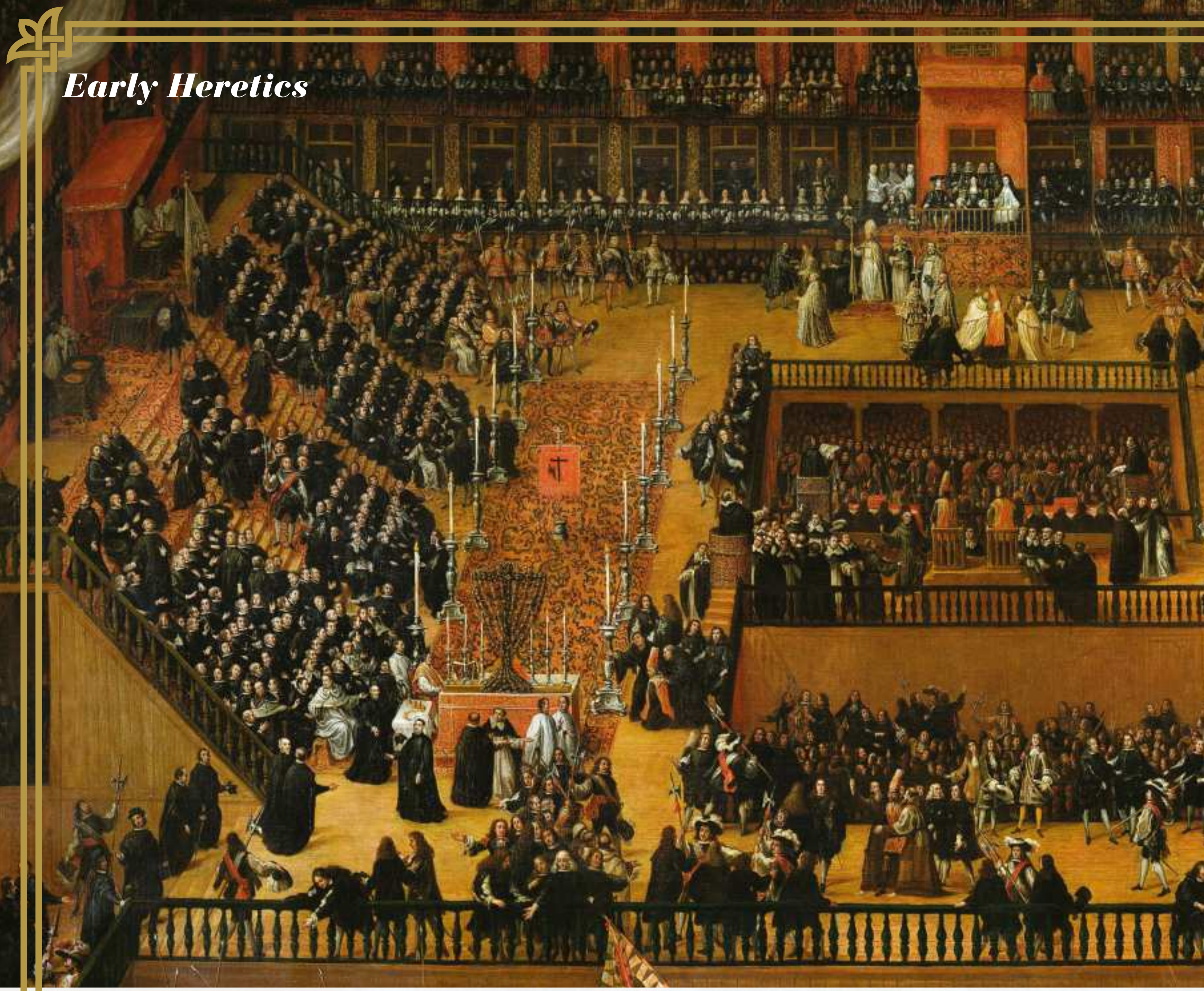
Steps were taken to assess individual cases and determine whether a person had fallen into theological error. If sufficient evidence was accrued, the culprit would be arrested. Guilt was assumed, but the goal was always to secure confession and repentance during incarceration. If this was not forthcoming, a trial would follow. Matters would culminate in the so-called 'autos-da-fé', during which the guilty and the penitent were paraded in public.

Sentences varied widely: from loss of property to beatings, from exile to enforced pilgrimage, and the wearing of distinctive clothing – marking the guilty party out – for a period of time. If the unrepentant prisoner had committed a sufficiently serious crime, or if they had relapsed after a previous offence, the death penalty was available. At this point, they would be handed over to the secular authorities to be killed, usually by burning, as the Church was not officially allowed to oversee the shedding of blood.

The efficiency of the early Inquisition was combined with what many saw as unnecessary harshness. As early as 1482, the pope complained that "many true and faithful Christians, on the testimony of enemies, rivals, slaves and other lower and even less proper persons, have without any legitimate proof been thrust into secular prisons, tortured and condemned as relapsed heretics". They had, he continued, been "deprived of their goods and property and handed over to the secular arm to be executed, to the peril of souls, setting a pernicious example and causing disgust to many".

Precise numbers are hard to pin down but, while contemporary chroniclers tended to exaggerate, more accurate estimates are still

IMAGE SOURCE: PETER MEULENER



harrowing. During the first decade, 130 people may have been killed at Saragossa along with 225 at Valencia. It has been suggested that a further 1,000 men and women were killed in Castile during this time. Spain as a whole saw up to 2,000 deaths.

This history contained some truly horrific moments, like when a notary at Jaén locked up a 15-year-old girl, stripped her naked and whipped her until she testified against her mother. Moments of absurdity were not uncommon. Many fled the Inquisition before its agents could pounce, so sentences frequently had to be passed in absentia and the condemned were burned in effigy. Such judgements meant a lifetime of fear, as was the case with Isabel, the wife of Lope de la Higuera of Ciudad Real.

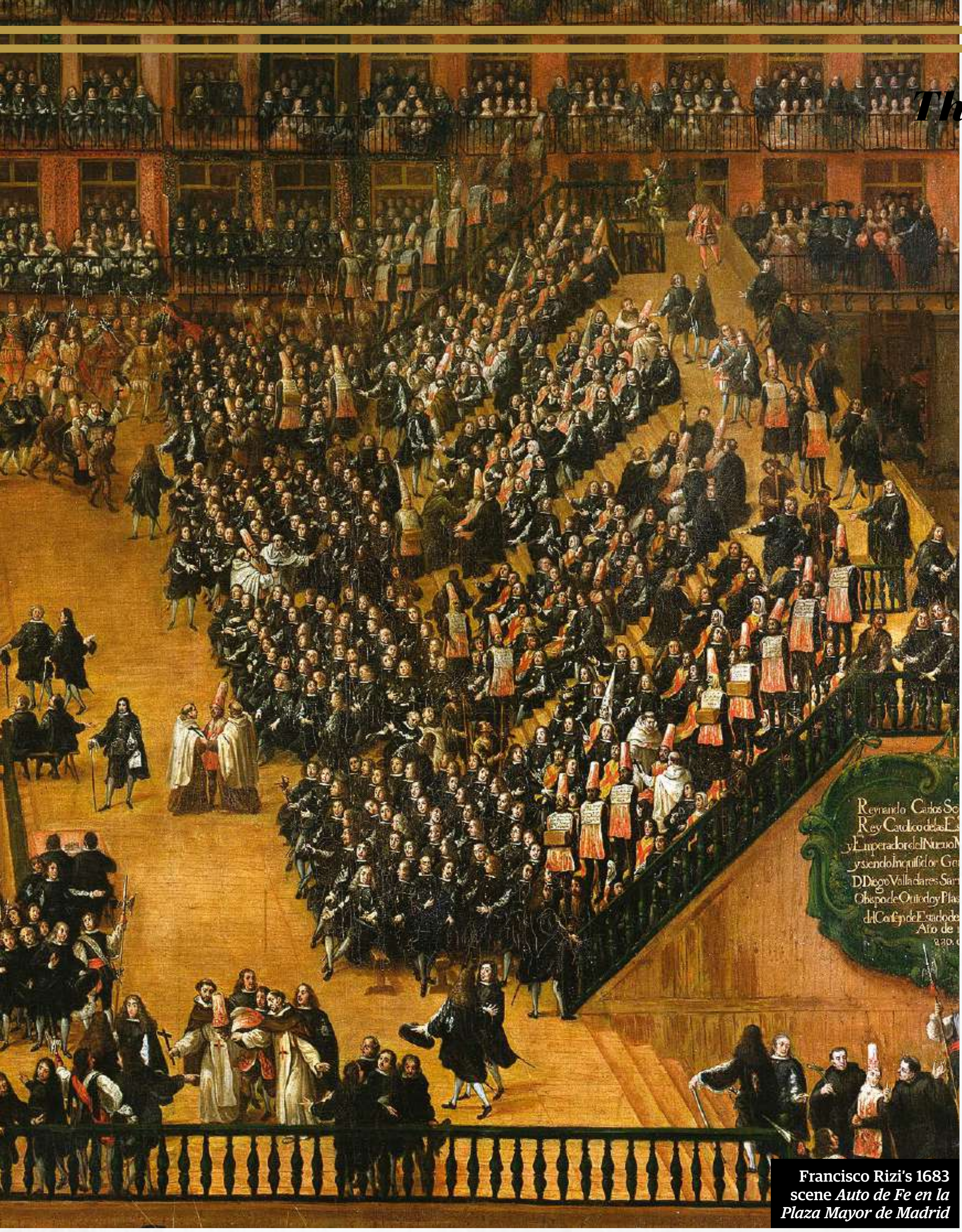
In 1484, the inquisitors determined that she "lives with the reputation of a Christian" but "follows the laws of Moses." She did not work on the Sabbath, read Jewish books, kept Jewish feast days and followed Jewish dietary rules. Isabel was given 30 days to appear, but she wisely fled the scene.

In her absence, it was announced that she was "a heretic and apostate". She was to be killed by the authorities of "any other cities, villages and places within the kingdoms and outside of them, wherever the aforesaid Isabel might be found".

The Spanish Inquisition kept going for over 200 years and around 32,000 people were killed

The Spanish Inquisition may not have been special in terms of its goals and procedures, but during its first decades it provoked unusually ugly attitudes. In the early 16th century, a parish priest in Seville fumed against the "heretical mosaic depravity" of lapsed conversos. It was a "horrible beast" that had "walked around very freely" and, even with the Inquisition at work, the menace remained at large. "It will be necessary," the priest wrote, "for this fire to burn until all who judaize are consumed by it, so that not one remains, not even their children... it should burn even the younger ones if they are touched by the same leprosy."

At the heart of all this was the broader anti-Semitic sentiment in Spain. The Inquisition couldn't move against practising Jews - its purview was limited to baptised Christians - but converts were irresistible targets. Throughout the Middle Ages, Iberian Judaism had veered between periods of relative security and terrible outbursts of persecution. In 1391, for example, hundreds of Jews had been slaughtered in the streets of Seville, with 250 more massacred in Valencia and a further 400 in Barcelona. Many others had been forced to convert.


Reynando Carlos Se
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y Emperador del Nuevo M
y siendo Inquisidor Gr
D. Diego Valladares Sar
Obispo de Oviedo y Plas
del Consejo de Estado de
Año de

Francisco Rizi's 1683 scene *Auto de Fe en la Plaza Mayor de Madrid*

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

> "HUNDREDS OF JEWS HAD BEEN SLAUGHTERED"

Anti-Semitic feeling was alive and well at the time of Isabella's birth, and people were peddling their fantastical notions of Jews as traitors, "physician-poisoners" and "ritual murderers" who cut the throats of Christian children. The queen does not appear to have shared the more virulent strains of anti-Jewish feeling – she happily employed Jews as doctors and financial advisers, and men such as Isaac Abravanel did well in royal service. In 1477, Isabella had declared: "All the Jews of my kingdom are mine and are under my shelter and protection, and it is for me to defend and protect them and maintain their rights."

At times throughout the 1480s, the monarchs took steps to contain the worst anti-Semitic excesses of local officials. Conversos, however, were a different matter and, in the end, even the queen's pledges came to count for very little. In 1492, the Edict of Expulsion arrived, and its intent was all too clear. It spoke of "the great damage that has been done and is being done to Christians by the contact, conversation and communication they have with Jews". They "seek by all possible means to subvert faithful Christians and take them away from our holy Catholic faith… luring them and perverting them with their flawed beliefs and opinions". Local banishments had been tried but they had failed, so "we have resolved to order all the Jews and Jewesses of our kingdoms to leave them, never to return to them, nor to any part of them". Should they do so, they would be stripped of their property and killed "without any trial, sentence or declaration".

Leading members of the Jewish community launched their protests. They included Isaac Abravanel who, by one account, "stood like a lion in wisdom and strength, and in the most elegant language… admonished the king and queen". His pleas were rejected and, ahead of fleeing Spain, he wrote a letter to Isabella "in which he chastised her mercilessly, and showed no respect for her rank". Who could blame him?

It is arguable that Ferdinand and Isabella engineered the expulsion in order to achieve religious uniformity within the country. Finally capturing Granada was part of the same process, as was the Spanish Inquisition. Isabella perhaps believed that winning back converts who had strayed was an act of compassion and that those who failed to comply were beyond her help. Such logic, while deeply unpalatable to us, was commonplace at the time. It is also worth remembering the adjudication of one of Isabella's many chroniclers, however. When necessary, he explained, she would "follow the path of harshness rather than mercy".

It is often suggested that Ferdinand was the guiding force when it came to the Inquisition, but little happened without Isabella's approval. When she married Ferdinand, strict and somewhat humiliating conditions were forced upon her husband. He was to reside in Castile and not leave without permission, and any appointments to leading roles would require the queen's explicit approval. When Henry IV died in 1474, Isabella rushed to a coronation without waiting for Ferdinand – an action that made it very clear that his role in Castile would be that of a consort.

The couple adopted new heraldic emblems in which their symbols were intertwined and a cheery motto declared "tanto monta, monta tanto – Isabel como Fernando", (one is equal to the other – both Isabella and Ferdinand). Everyone knew, however, that Castile was more important than Aragon in terms of size, population, resources and prestige. Isabella was, beyond question, the senior partner in the union of the two crowns. Ferdinand may have possessed greater inquisitorial zeal, but his wife certainly shared the responsibility for the Inquisition's actions. As for those actions, historians have wisely suggested that the Spanish Inquisition was not conspicuously more savage than comparable institutions over the course of its history, but during its early decades it showed its most uncompromising face and claimed more than its share of undeserving victims. Contemporaries did not fail to notice.

An undertow of criticism was discernible in those years and, upon occasion, drastic action was taken. One inquisitor, Pedro Arbués, knew he was at risk and routinely wore a chainmail smock and a steel cap to protect him from attack. These did not deter the eight men who stabbed him in the neck as he knelt in prayer at Saragossa Cathedral on 15 September 1485. He died of his wounds the next day. Sometimes vengeance gave way to poignant words, as when in 1507, three years after the death of Isabella, Gonzalo de Ayora concluded that "the damage which the wicked officials of the Inquisition have wrought in my land are so many and so great that no reasonable person on hearing them would not grieve".

JUDAISM AND HOLY WAR

The concept of holy war in Judaism is tempered by ancient scripture and the realities of the modern world

Words by Michael E Haskew

Holy war, the idea that God has commanded His followers to engage in war to achieve a desired outcome against those who do not believe in the same religion or those who would do its adherents harm, is nearly as old as organised religion itself. While there is no specific term in the Hebrew tradition to describe "holy war," the Old Testament is replete with history and scripture that recount the wars of the early Jewish people – wars that were commanded and sanctioned by the Most High. These conflicts were waged with the assurance that God would grant victory in the achievement of His overarching plan for His chosen people.

For generations, the prosecution of wars that God commanded, or at the very least authorised, resulted in victories. However, two major defeats in the early Christian era – the failed rebellion against Rome from 66 to 70 CE and the disastrous Bar Kokhba Rebellion of 132-136 CE – brought about a rabbinical reassessment of war itself, and particularly the concept of holy war.

After their freedom from bondage in Egypt and wandering in the desert for 40 years, the Israelites camped on the plains of Moab near the River Jordan and across from the mighty city of Jericho. God ordered Moses to address the people, providing specific instructions in the text of Numbers 30:51-56:

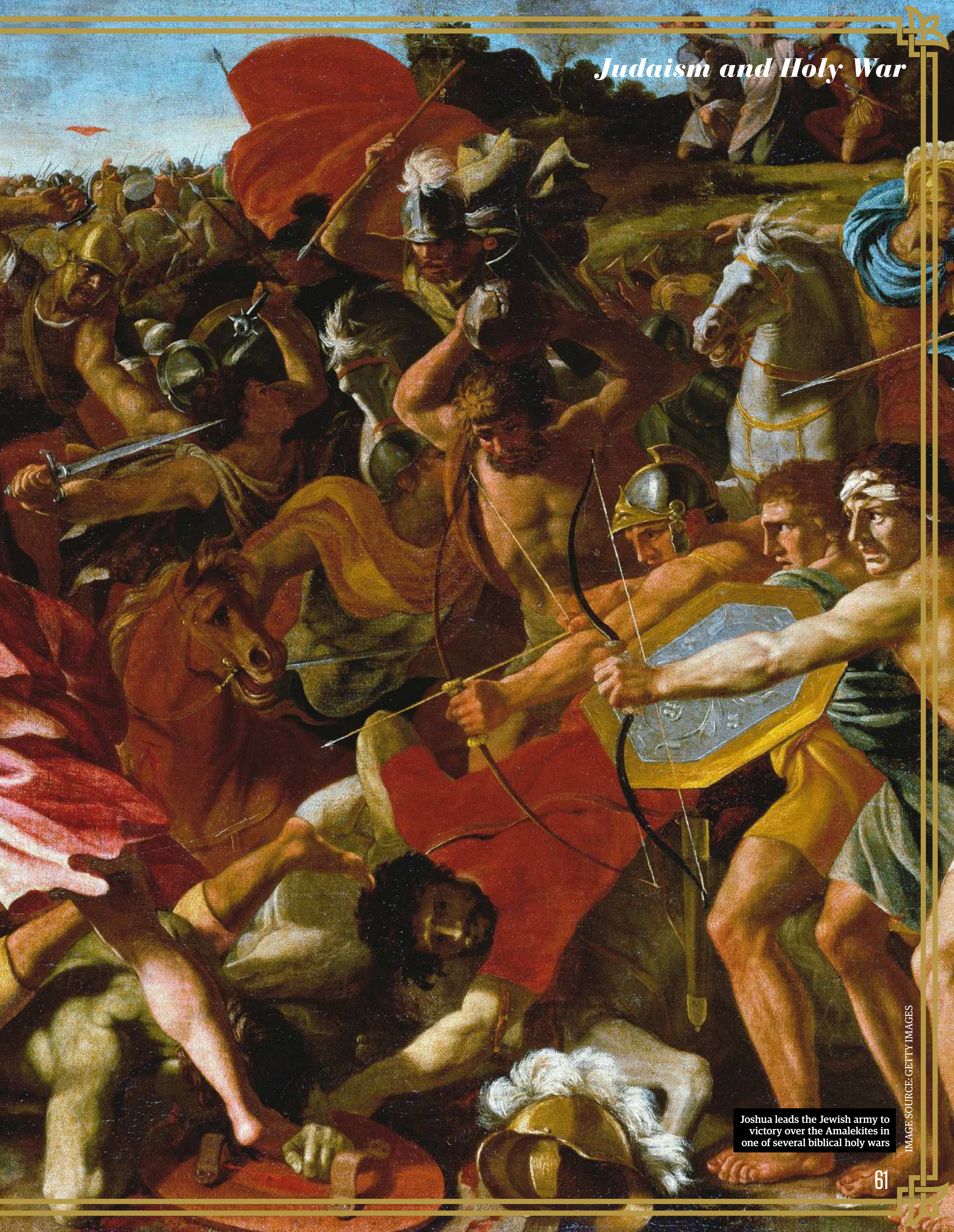
"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess.Distribute the land by lot, according to your clans. To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Whatever falls to them by lot will be theirs. Distribute it according to your ancestral tribes.

"'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.'"

The implication is clear: God commands, and the Israelites are compelled to respond.

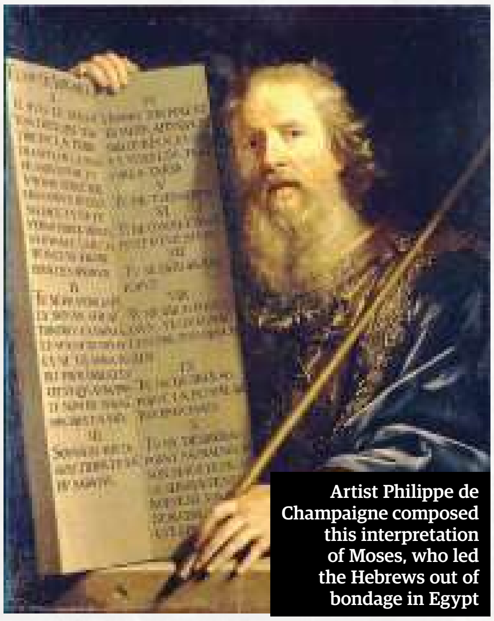
In the Book of Deuteronomy (3:3-7), Moses recounts that God turned over King Og and all his dominion to the Israelites: "So the Lord our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army. We struck them down, leaving no survivors. At that time we took all his cities. There was not one of the 60 cities that we did not take from them – the whole region of Argob, Og's kingdom in Bashan… We completely destroyed them, as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, destroying every city – men, women and children. But all the livestock and the plunder from their cities we carried off for ourselves."

Also in Deuteronomy (7:1-3), scripture identifies seven peoples that the Israelites are commanded to eradicate from Canaan. The

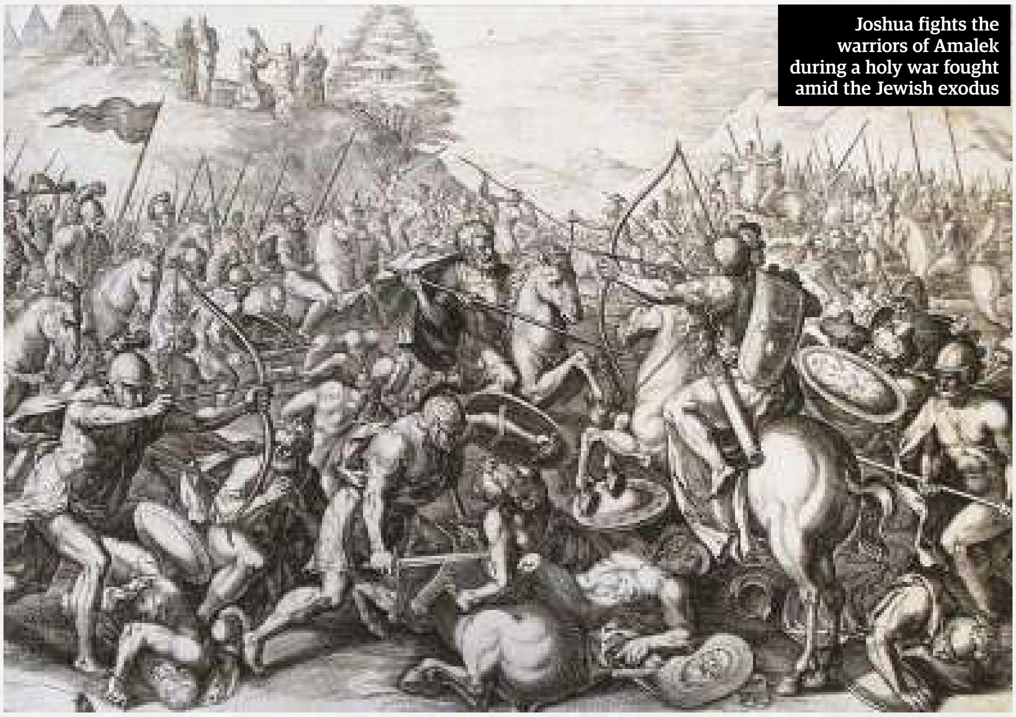


Joshua leads the Jewish army to victory over the Amalekites in one of several biblical holy wars

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES



Artist Philippe de Champaigne composed this interpretation of Moses, who led the Hebrews out of bondage in Egypt



Joshua fights the warriors of Amalek during a holy war fought amid the Jewish exodus

directive is explicit: "When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations - the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you - and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy."

When Judah Maccabee led the Jewish people in revolt against the Seleucid Greeks, the conflict was rightly judged as a holy war - that is, a war in the name and defence of the faith. Judah himself proclaimed that the strength for victory came from heaven and the favour of God had swung the balance of power to the Jews, from the many to the few. Both the first and second Books of Maccabees reveal stories of martyrdom, a common feature that characterises holy war across religious boundaries.

The success of the Maccabean Revolt validated the concept of holy war, although the Jewish leadership subsequently downplayed the military aspects of the victory, stressing the miracle of the oil and lamp during the season of Hanukkah. Such remembrance may be indicative of a shift away from the emphasis on holy war due to the major setbacks that occurred in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.

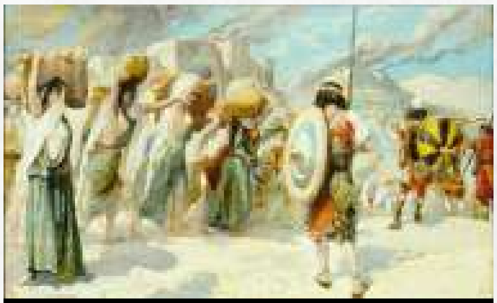
In 66 CE, scattered opposition to Roman rule in Judea erupted into outright open rebellion. At that time, the conflict was probably considered a defensive war, a conflict for the preservation and survival of the Jewish people, and therefore a holy war.

Initially, the Jews were successful, expelling the Romans from Jerusalem and defeating a Roman force led by Gallus, the imperial legate of Syria, at Beth Horon. In response, Emperor Nero dispatched Roman armies under Vespasian and Titus to suppress the rebellion.

"SAFEGUARDS WERE INTRODUCED TO CURB RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS DECLARING HOLY WAR"

The Jewish army under Josephus fled the field when it met the Roman legions in Galilee. Following the six-week siege of Jopata, Josephus surrendered to Vespasian and later defected to the Roman side after being enslaved. Jewish resistance melted before the Roman forces. In August 70 CE, Jerusalem fell, and the temple was looted and burned. With the collapse of Jewish authority, years of subjugation to Roman rule followed.

After several generations, the desire for independence emerged once again, and Simon bar Kokhba led the Jews in an uprising against Roman rule from 132 to 136 CE in response to restrictions on Jewish religious practices and traditions, as well as the Roman intent to establish a colony on the site of Jerusalem. Again, the uprising was perceived as a holy war in defence of Judaism, a conflict that was spurred by the necessity of the people to survive.



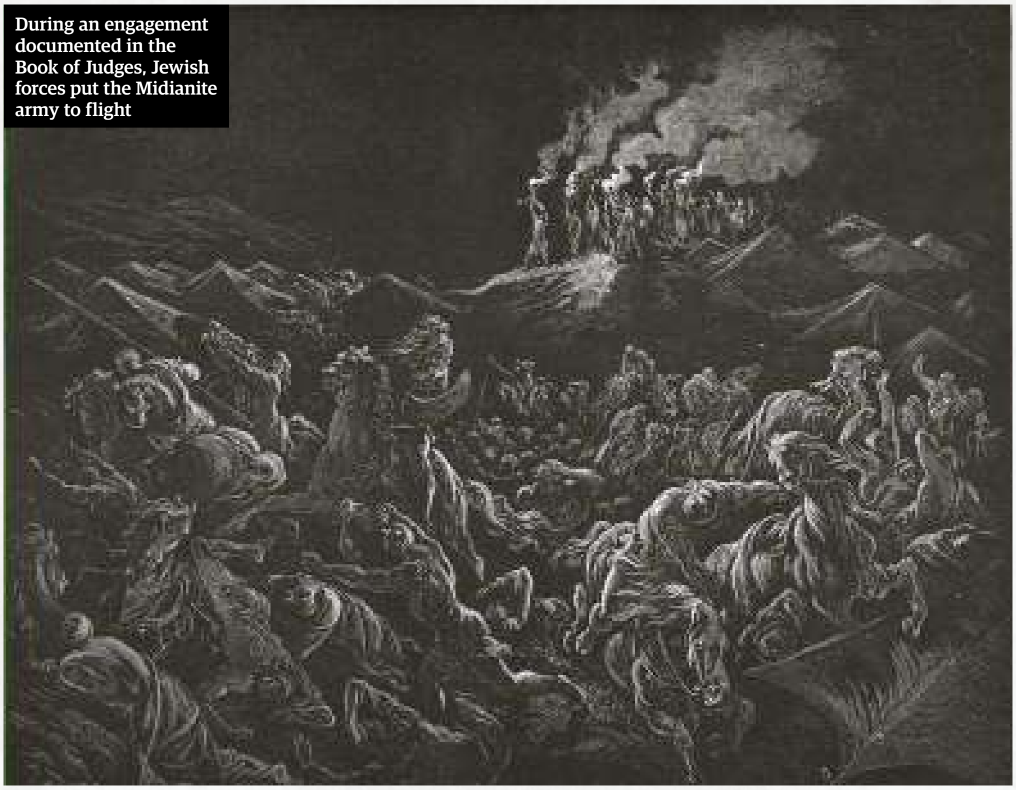
After their forces have been defeated, Midianite women are led into captivity by Hebrew soldiers

Although bar Kokhba was successful at first, defeating the Romans in several battles, driving the occupiers out of Jerusalem and establishing an independent state that he ruled for approximately two years, the overwhelming might of the Roman military eventually defeated the Jews. Roman forces under Julius Severus reclaimed Jerusalem and captured the coastal city of Bethar, killing bar Kokhba. The war devastated the Jewish population in Judea, and the Roman historian Cassius Deo reported that at least 580,000 Jews were killed as a result, while Josephus placed the number of dead at more than one million. Countless others were enslaved.

Thus, these disastrous 'holy wars' led to the rabbinical rethinking of the concept itself. Safeguards were introduced to curb the prospects of future religious zealots or heretics declaring holy war and leading the people into further and worse catastrophe.

At its core, the Jewish faith does not consider waging war as a means of bringing about justice and peace as a negative option. Although certain wars may be noble or ethically justified, it had become abundantly clear that the idea of 'holy war' could lead to disastrous results if initiated by the wrong individual or group.

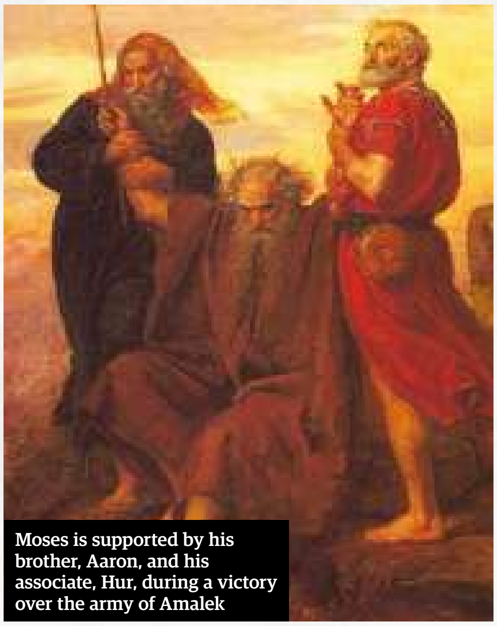
Ancient rabbis reinforced the idea that peace is a circumstance derived from God and is always the ultimate objective. Jewish law and tradition, therefore, incorporate the tenet that a sincere overture of peace must be attempted prior to the



During an engagement documented in the Book of Judges, Jewish forces put the Midianite army to flight

opening of hostilities. Further, if war is initiated, every opportunity should be given to non-military or civilian populations to exit the combat zone.

In considering future wars, the rabbis identified three distinct types of conflict. First, obligatory wars were those commanded by God, including the eradication of the Canaanites and other identified peoples. Second, defensive wars were sanctioned. If the Jewish people were attacked, they were required to defend themselves and their faith. Interestingly, defensive wars were considered a form of obligatory war and further encompassed a preemptive strike if it was known that an enemy intended to attack the Jewish people. The third type of war was an optional conflict, undertaken only for a good reason and after attempts to maintain peace through negotiation had been exhausted. Each required a certain level of approval, either vested in the king alone or ratified by the representative body of the faith.



Moses is supported by his brother, Aaron, and his associate, Hur, during a victory over the army of Amalek

Subsequent to these interpretations of the characteristics of holy war, meant to shield the Jewish community from destruction, the concept subsided and essentially remained dormant in Jewish theory and practice for two millennia. However, during the Middle Ages it was discussed once more among scholars.

During the 12th century, Maimonides codified Jewish teachings in the Mishneh Torah, a perspective on the texts of the Tanakh, the Jewish Bible, and philosophical points of view. Maimonides, whose work remains a seminal piece of Jewish literature today, was viewed as a heretic by some scholars. However, his effort was intended to be widely read and considered and stood upon the rabbinical pronouncement of the different types of wars.

In modern times, the concept of holy war has re-emerged within some sectors of the Jewish population. Since the emergence of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century and the birth of the state of Israel decades later, elements of Jewish society have viewed the continuing struggle against Arab, Palestinian and Muslim adversaries as the very definition of holy war as prescribed by the rabbis. Debate rages, and the open question of defining holy war remains problematic for the Jewish people and the government of Israel.

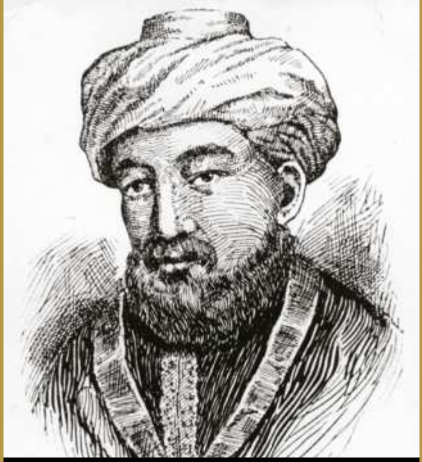
MAIMONIDES AND THE MISHNEH TORAH

Enlightening and controversial, the Mishneh Torah was widely distributed and remains influential in Jewish thought today

Maimonides is a towering figure in the history of the Jewish faith, and his composition of the Mishneh Torah, written from 1170 to 1180 while the author was living in Egypt, was an attempt to complement the written Torah with the codifying of the oral law. The work provides commentary on virtually every aspect of Jewish life and consists of 14 books, including Sefer Shoftim (Judges), the last volume, which addresses the topics of kings and wars, including the concept of holy war.

As the only Medieval treatise that comprehensively addresses Jewish societal conduct, the Mishneh Torah was immediately the subject of controversy as some rabbinical scholars saw it as a threat to the reading and study of the Torah itself while there were questions as to its source materials.

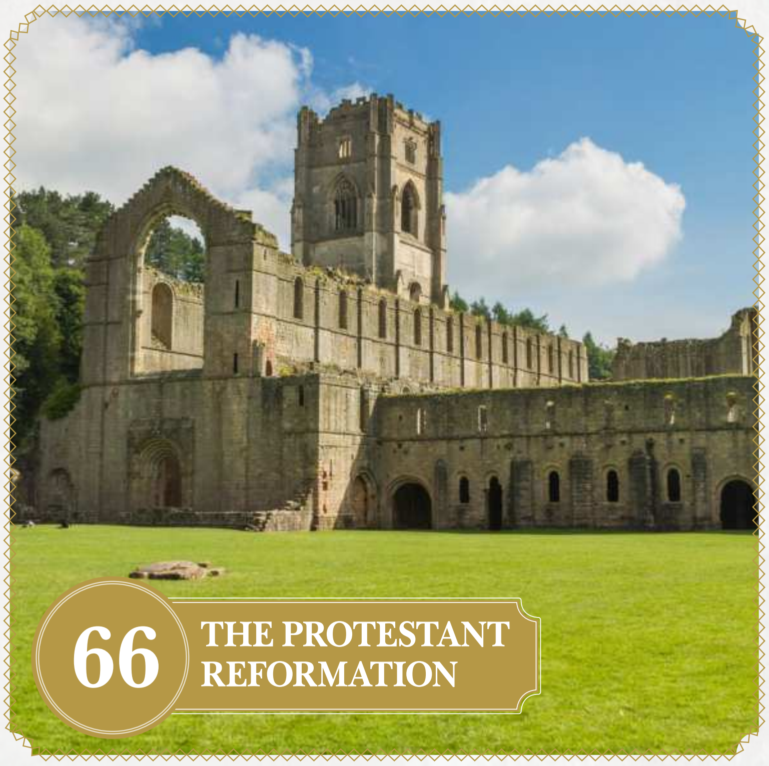
Although some contemporary authorities considered his work heretical and his detractors were particularly critical in Spain, Maimonides is remembered today as perhaps the foremost Jewish scholar of the Middle Ages and the leader of the Jewish community in Egypt. During his lifetime, he also made contributions to the studies of astronomy, science and medicine. He died in 1204 and was buried in the city of Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.



The Jewish scholar Maimonides commented on the principles of holy war in his Mishneh Torah, written in the Middle Ages

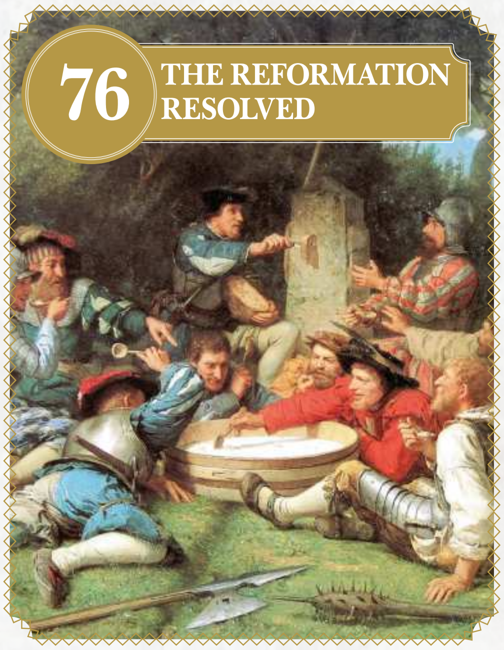
IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES

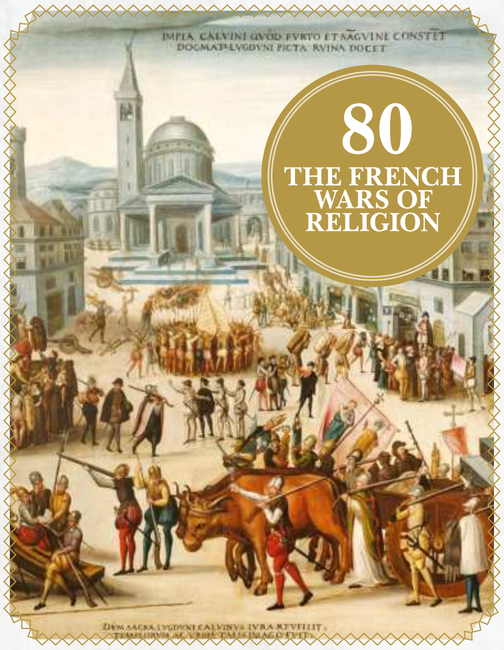
THE REFORMATION


66 THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

68 THE HUSSITE WARS

74 THE GERMAN PEASANTS' WAR


76 THE REFORMATION RESOLVED


80 THE FRENCH WARS OF RELIGION
IMPIA CALVINI QVOD FVRTO ET SAGVINE CONSTET
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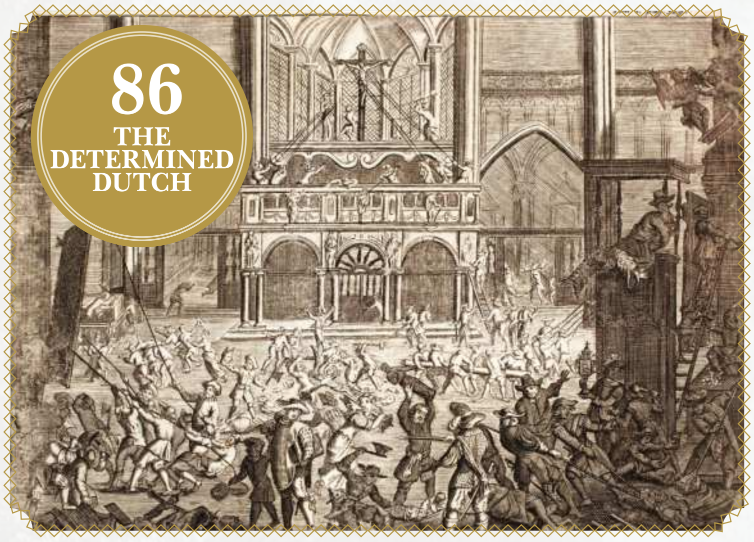
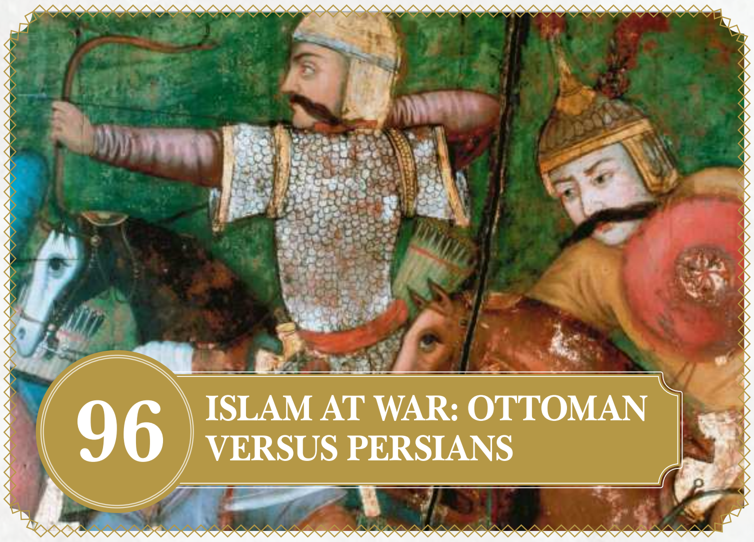


86 THE DETERMINED DUTCH

92 BLOOD & COIN



96 ISLAM AT WAR: OTTOMAN VERSUS PERSIANS

100 ISLAMIC HERETICS AND HERESIES

104 EVER WESTWARD

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

How a single act of defiance sparked a wildfire of destruction and religious reform that swept through Europe and changed the world forever

1517

MARTIN LUTHER'S DEFIANCE

Luther posts his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg in protest at some of the Church's practices, including the sale of indulgences as a means of raising money.

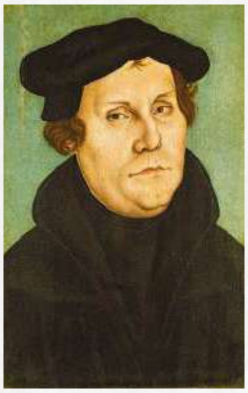


IMAGE SOURCE: LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER

1520

A COLLISION COURSE WITH ROME

Luther publishes and circulates a damning pamphlet in which he discusses the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, as well as openly criticising both the Church and the pope.

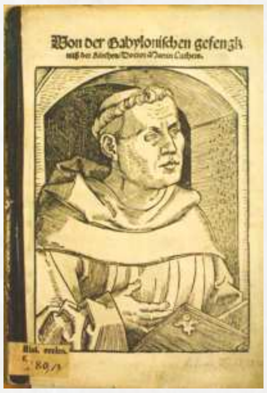


IMAGE SOURCE: IMS, WIKIPEDIA

1534

THE ACT OF SUPREMACY

Henry VIII instructs Thomas Cromwell to push through an act to make him head of the Church in England. Ties with Rome are broken.

IMAGE SOURCE: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

1535-36

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Thomas More refuses to accept Henry as head of the Church and is executed. William Tyndale is found guilty of heresy for his Bible translation and burned at the stake.

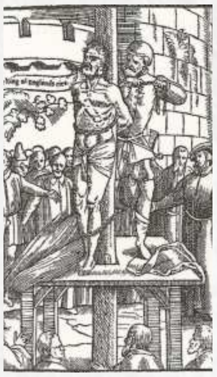


IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

1536

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

Took

4 YEARS

to complete

A total of about

376

monasteries

For all monasteries with a revenue of less than **£200** per year

IMAGE SOURCE: THINKSTOCK

1536

JOHN CALVIN

John Calvin publishes his version of reform, The *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The Catholic Church is now under attack from factions of reformers with very differing views.

IMAGE SOURCE: HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

After being tied to a stake, Tyndale was strangled before being burned

1555

THE PEACE OF AUGSBURG

This treaty ends conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the Schmalkaldic League of Lutheran Princes. Lutheranism is to be tolerated and on track to becoming properly recognised in Europe.

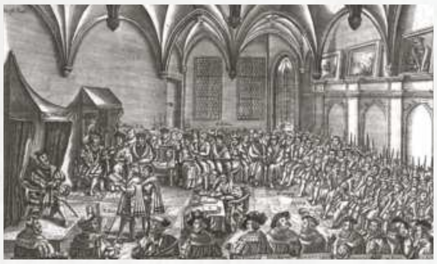


IMAGE SOURCE: DESCRIPTIVE AND REVISIONARY DEMOCRACY

1559

PROTESTANTISM COMES TO SCOTLAND

John Knox, a staunch follower of Calvin, is central to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. England returns to Protestantism under Elizabeth I following Mary I's Catholic reign.

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

1562-98

FRANCE AT WAR WITH ITSELF

The French Religious Wars are actually individual conflicts **EIGHT**

As many as **4,000** Huguenots are executed at one time

By the time the Edict of Nantes ends the conflict nearly **4 MILLION** are dead

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

THE DIET OF WORMS

Summoned to answer questions before Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Luther's actions are deemed unacceptable and he is condemned as a heretic. He is excommunicated by the pope.

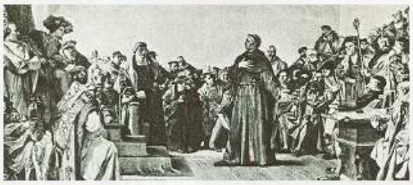


IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

1521

HENRY VIII ATTACKS LUTHER

In answer to Luther's attack on the Catholic Church, Henry writes his own pamphlet, *Septem Sacramentorum*, defending it. A grateful pope gives Henry the title 'Defender of the Faith'.

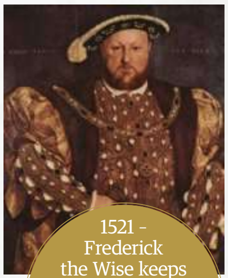


IMAGE SOURCE: HANS HOLBEIN

1521 - Frederick the Wise keeps Luther inside Wartburg Castle, hoping this will lower his popularity

1521

A QUESTION OF NUMBERS

Martin Luther challenges the **7** sacraments of the Church

Calvin sets out **5** principles of theology

IMAGE SOURCE: THOMAS JENNER

The Augsburg Confession consists of **28** ARTICLES of Lutheran Doctrine presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V

1517-1536

HENRY EXCOMMUNICATED

Following his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII begins his own path of action in direct conflict with the pope. Despite being called a 'Defender of the Faith', he finds himself excommunicated.

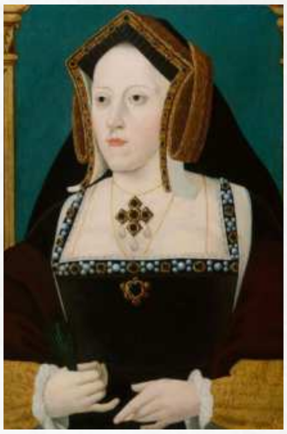
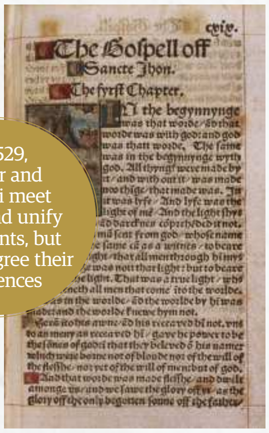


IMAGE SOURCE: JOANNES CORVUS

1533

TYNDALE'S BIBLE PUBLISHED

In direct conflict with the Catholic Church's practice of services in Latin, William Tyndale publishes the first English translation of the Bible. Those able to read can now question the wording and the Church's authority.



cxix.

The Goſpell off Sancte Jhon.

The fyrſt Chapter.

IMAGE SOURCE: WILLIAM TYNDALE

In 1529, Luther and Zwingli meet to try and unify Protestants, but cannot agree their differences

1526

ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT IS BORN

Inspired by Luther's dissent, the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli forms the Anabaptists, denouncing the doctrine of baptism in children and advocating for adult baptisms when they are old enough to confess their sins.

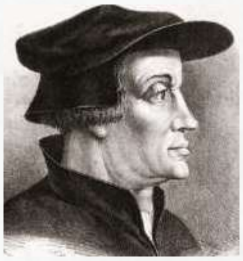


IMAGE SOURCE: GEORG OSTERWALD

1525

THE EDICT OF NANTES

Following the persecution of the Protestant Huguenots, King Henry IV of France grants them religious toleration. It brings civil order but is revoked by Henry's grandson, Louis, in 1685.

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

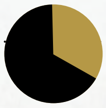
IMAGESOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

1560 - The Geneva Bible is the first to be mechanically printed and mass-produced

1598

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

The war actually lasts 29 YEARS, 11 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS & 1 DAY



Between **25-40%** of the German population are killed

The Holy Roman Empire consists of approximately **1,000** semi-autonomous states

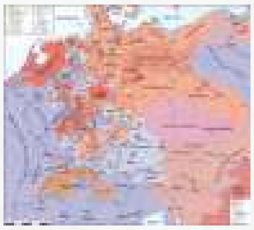


IMAGE SOURCE: DMITRIJ RODIONOV

1618-48

THIRTY YEARS' WAR ENDS

The Treaty of Westphalia ends a destructive conflict between Catholics and Protestants from across Europe – mainly in Germany. It changes the European map and religious tolerance forever.

IMAGE SOURCE: MUSEO DEL PRADO

1648

THE HUSSITE WARS

The 15th-century civil war in Bohemia had both religious and political causes

Words by Derek Wilson and Michael E Haskew

Between 1419 and 1434 there occurred in central Europe a sequence of events that could almost be described as a dress rehearsal for the Reformation that would fracture the continent a century later. The Hussite Wars impacted all of what is now the Czech Republic and some of its neighbouring lands. What was primarily at stake were certain aspects of Christian doctrine, but these had implications for the organisation and moral health of the Church, the status of the clergy, the relationships of different ethnic groups (principally the Czechs and the Germans), the hierarchical nature of society and the maintenance of national identities within the Holy Roman Empire.

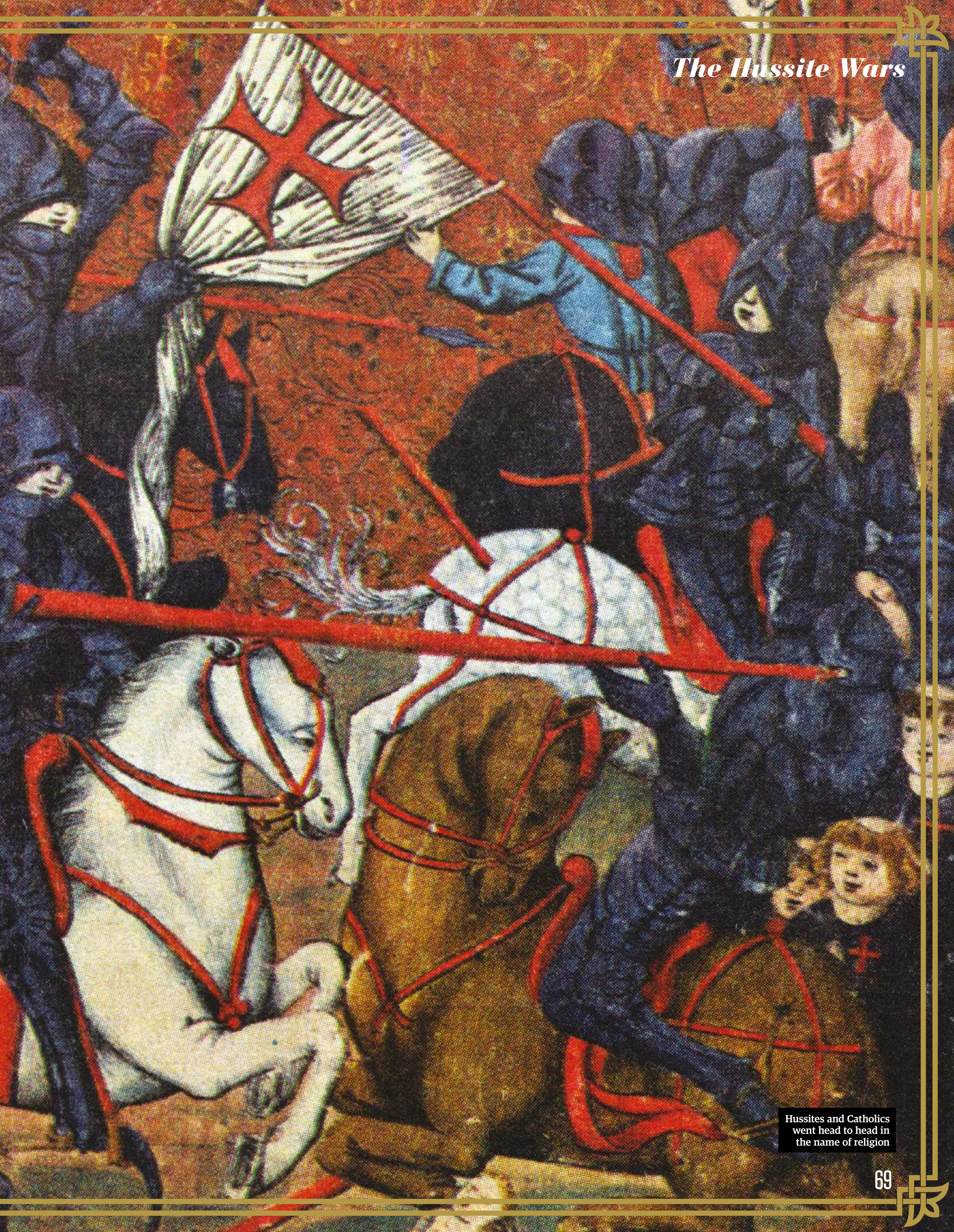
Nationalism played a major part in the Hussite controversy. The Czech and German elements within the Bohemian population were frequently at odds with each other. Added to this was the long-standing resentment of papal interference in the nation's affairs. All Catholics owed allegiance to the pope as well as to their secular rulers, and Bohemians were not the only people north of the Alps who were frustrated by the power wielded by the pope in distant Rome.

The growing conflict was further complicated by the Papal Schism. In 1378 a dispute had arisen that resulted in a conflict between rival popes, one in Rome and one in Avignon. The scandal continued for decades and was compounded in 1409 when the Council of Pisa nominated a third papal candidate with the title of Alexander V. Bohemia officially backed Alexander and Hus preached in his favour. He had, by now, become the leader of a politico-religious rebellion. In 1412 Prague was placed under a papal interdict, which meant that all Catholic rites and ceremonies were suspended. This and the martyrdom of Hus and other leaders meant that a state of civil war now existed in Bohemia.

Hussitism was a cause identified by religious reform and nationalism. Taking the Bible as their supreme authority, Hussites opposed Catholic doctrines that had no clear support in the written word of God. Their main distinguishing belief was Utraquism, the distribution of both bread and wine to the laity at Holy Communion in accordance with the rite as instituted by Christ at the Last Supper. This was a protest against the Catholic custom of emphasising the superiority of clergy by permitting the laity to partake only of the bread. Utraquism was the first of the Four Articles of Prague issued in 1420. The other points in this declaration of Hussite religion were freedom to preach the Gospel; rejection of the worldly power and authority of the clergy; and the public punishment of clerical sins such as simony (selling positions within the Church). However, it is simplistic to narrow the 'causes' of the Hussite Wars to a handful of specific points. At the roots of the conflict lay deep resentments – Czechs versus Germans, peasants versus aristocrats, laity versus clergy, doctrinal reformers versus traditionalists, nationalists versus imperialists.

The rampant discord soon led to open war. On 30 July 1419 a Hussite protest march in Prague set off for the town hall, where councillors and imperial

"TAKING THE BIBLE AS THEIR SUPREME AUTHORITY, HUSSITES OPPOSED CATHOLIC DOCTRINES"

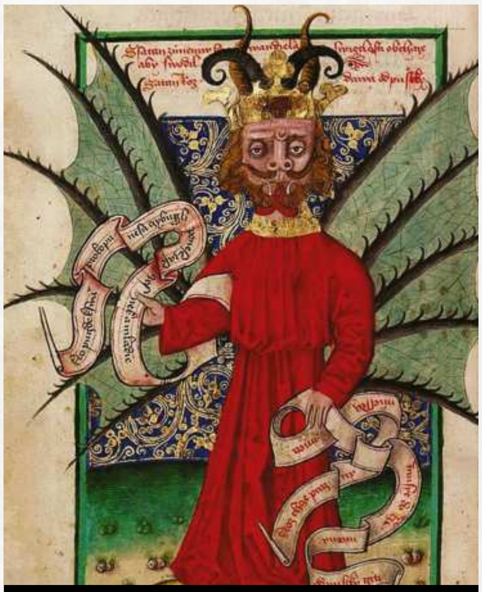


Hussites and Catholics went head to head in the name of religion representatives were holding some Hussites as prisoners. What might have started as a delegation turned into a mob when stones were thrown from the windows of the town hall. The protesters broke into the building, grabbed seven of the officials and threw them out of the window in an event sometimes known as the First Defenestration of Prague). They then took control of the city. It was obvious that this defiance would not go unpunished, so the rebels organised themselves into an army.

To restore order Pope Martin V declared a crusade against the 'heretics' and called all loyal Catholics to take up arms. The first serious military clash was the Battle of Sudom ř on 25 March 1420. The Hussites – a band of 400 artisans and farmers together with women and children – were surrounded by a royalist force and outnumbered five to one. Yet what should have been an easy victory for the Catholics became a heavy engagement from which the Catholic survivors were happy to retreat under the cover of nightfall.

It is not surprising, in view of the Hussites' mixed motives, that they soon divided. The more moderate reformers, usually called Utraquists, had no desire to see the breakdown of the social order and limited their protest to the doctrines and customs of the Church. The more radical Taborites, taking their name from their base at Tabor in the southern region of Bohemia, were all for a root-and-branch reorganisation of society, one that involved the redistribution of property, rejection of the priestly functions of the clergy and preparation for the end of the world, which they believed to be imminent.

The Taborites overran most of Bohemia and part of Moravia. Hussite churches were planted in Poland, Hungary and Rumania. Further confrontations with crusading forces occurred in 1421, 1422 and 1427, and on every occasion the Taborites were victorious. So formidable had the radical Hussites become as a military force that when yet another crusading army was sent against them in 1431 it turned tail and fled at the sight of the enemy.



An illustration from the Jena Codex shows the devil selling indulgences – an act seen as corrupt by many Christians who differed from Catholicism

IMAGE SOURCE: JANÍČEK ZMILELÝ Z PÍSKU

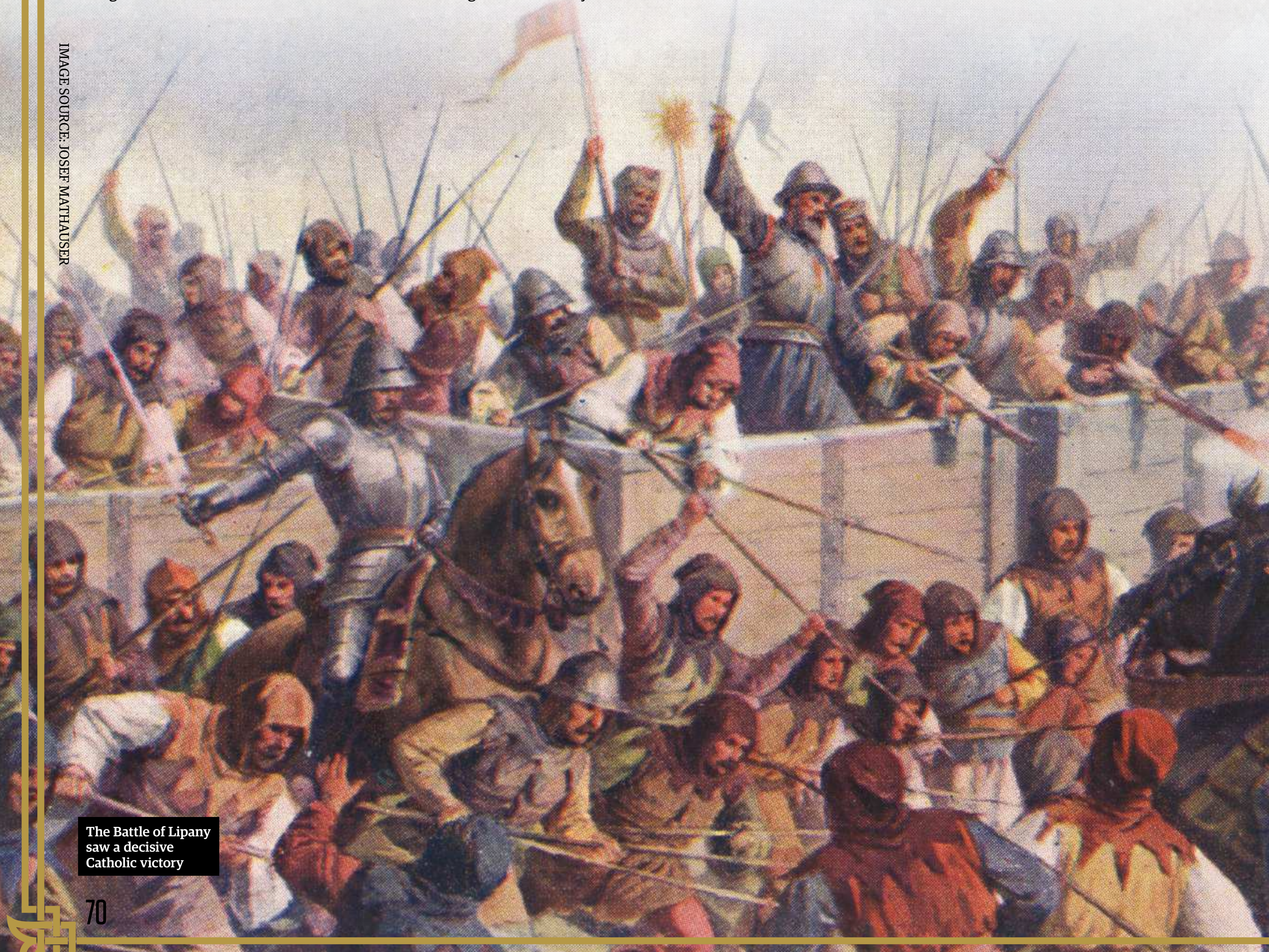


IMAGE SOURCE: JOSEF MATHAUSER

The Battle of Lipany saw a decisive Catholic victory

SCHOLAR, HERETIC AND MARTYR

Uncover the real story of religious revolutionary Jan Hus

This early manifestation of politico-religious tension in Europe sprang from the preaching and teaching of Jan Hus (c.1369-1415). Hus was a gifted scholar of the Kingdom of Bohemia (which today makes up part of the Czech Republic). He was a graduate of Prague University, where he was rector in 1402-03. In 1402 he was ordained as a priest. Hus was not very radical in terms of Catholic theology, but we can identify strands in his teachings that brought him to the attention of the authorities.

First and foremost, he was an independent-minded academic. At a time when the theology schools were expected to turn out graduates obedient to the orthodox doctrines sanctioned by Rome, Hus defended the right of scholars to debate open-mindedly.

At this time the works of the Oxford scholar John Wycliffe were attracting attention in academic circles, and Hus was partly influenced by their teachings. Wycliffe challenged the ecclesiastical establishment politically on its assumption of secular authority and doctrinally on its embellishing of the Bible with dogmas based on Church tradition. Hus did not endorse all Wycliffite teaching, but there was enough overlap for his opponents to accuse Hus of heresy (Wycliffe's works were banned in Bohemia in 1410).

Hus was also a populist - that is he supported the study of the Bible by lay people, and even supported preaching by scholars who were not priests. He was himself a preacher in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, which was not a parish church, and he made his appeal directly to the people by writing theological treatises in Czech rather than Latin, which was the language of academic debate.

Much of his preaching had a reformist tone. His criticism of the moral failings of the clergy attracted a considerable personal following, and his cause was not helped when bands of his fans carried out iconoclastic raids on churches, destroying statues and other images they found offensive. Hus became an unwilling hero of politically radical activists.

In 1412 Hus was condemned and ordered to appear before a Church court. His response was to go into voluntary exile and to appeal over the heads of the religious authorities to the ultimate Christian authority, Christ himself. Two years later, a council of senior clergy from across Europe was convened at Constance to put an end to all the scandals and confusion that had arisen over the previous 36 years. One of the problems on the agenda was that of the "contumacious" Jan Hus. The preacher willingly attended.

Despite having been promised safe conduct, Hus was immediately thrown into prison, condemned as a heretic without his writings being examined by the court and sentenced to death. On 6 July 1415, he was burned at the stake. He died singing.

A memorial to Hus stands today in the middle of the Old Town Square in Prague, Czech Republic

IMAGE SOURCE: DENNIS JARVIS

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

Yet, when the defeat of the Taborites came it was both sudden and complete. It was their fellow Czechs, the Utraquists, who delivered the coup de grace. Various attempts had been made to reach a peaceful compromise between the two branches of the Hussite church. The last was at the Council of Basel in 1433. The negotiators were no more successful than their predecessors. The following summer opposing forces met once again at Lipany, 40 kilometres east of Prague. The Taborites were comprehensively defeated and their leaders killed. Even now it was another two years before the terms of a lasting peace, known as the Compacts of Basel, were agreed.

What emerged was an arrangement unique in western Christendom. The Hussites had forced on the monolithic Catholic Church ruled from Rome a measure of compromise that was still officially regarded as heretical. The Hussite national Church did not depart from the traditional faith on fundamental matters of doctrine: the overthrow of the Taborites had eliminated religious radicalism. However, the Utraquists held stubbornly to their insistence on communion in both kinds, which implied that the Bible, and not the pope, was the ultimate authority. The Bible was translated into Czech and lay people were urged to read it. There was no escaping the fact, therefore, that the Hussites were in fact heretical.

Most Bohemians, right across the social spectrum, were Hussites. Public worship was noticeably different. Services were simplified; vestments were less ornate, with few sacred pictures and images having survived the iconoclasm of the earlier, more enthusiastic years; the vernacular was largely employed in the pulpit and at the altar as well as in the wealth of popular hymns, which were now written. Hus and other national martyrs were now revered as saints, and the memory of these national heroes would long stand in the way of any rapprochement with the Catholic minority.

Thanks to national war-weariness and the reformist ideology of Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund, who reigned from 1433 to 1437, one radical sect did survive, and its distinctive beliefs and practices were tolerated. The Church of the Brethren preserved the most radical and democratic elements in earlier Hussitism: scriptural theology, puritanical and evangelical practice, and democratic government by autonomous congregations occasionally collected in general assemblies, where the faith was defined and policy determined. The basic elements of religious and political life in Bohemia remained largely in place throughout the Reformation, surviving right up until the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618.

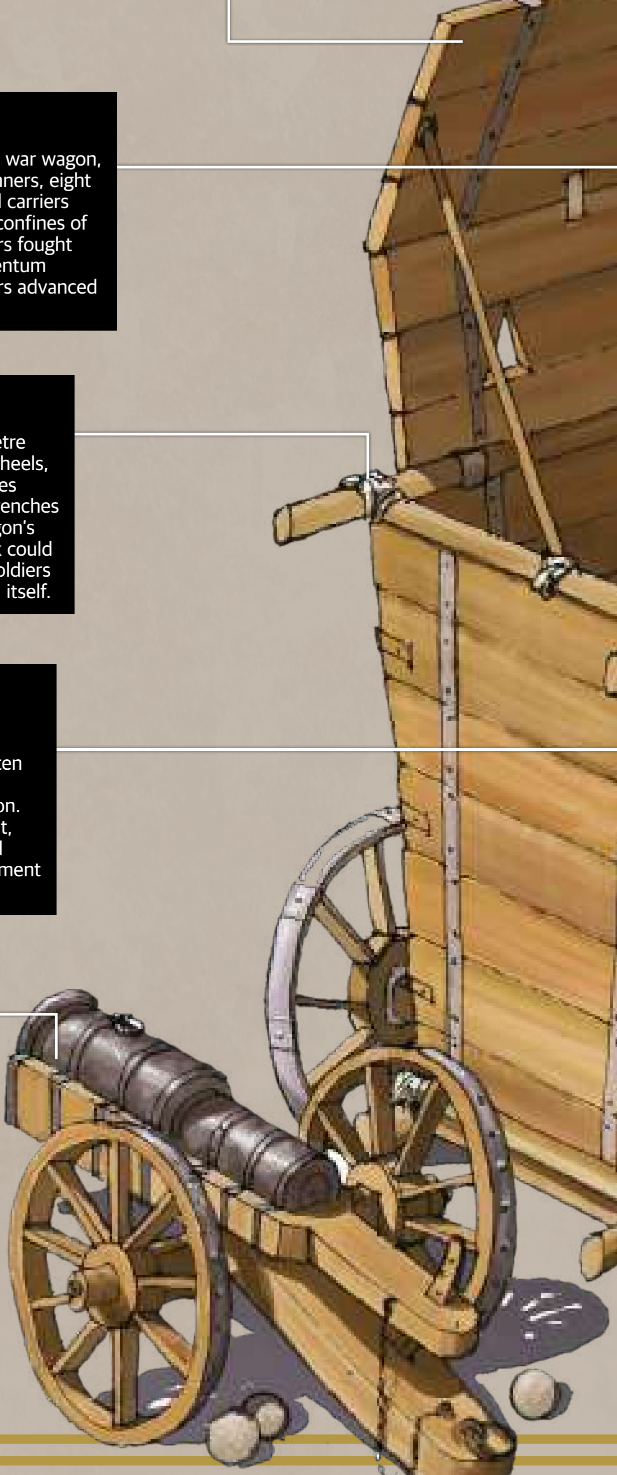
HUSSITE WAR WAGON

When religious differences brought rebellion in central Europe against the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy, Hussite armies under Jan Žižka, a superb tactician and battlefield commander, were immediately at a disadvantage. The armies were comprised of farmers and villagers from the lands of Bohemia and the surrounding country. Although motivated by religious zeal, they were lightly armed and often unschooled in military manoeuvres. Preparing to confront the legions of heavily armed and armoured knights, principally under Sigismund of Hungary, Žižka sought a battlefield equaliser.

From 1420 to 1431, the Hussites repelled five 'crusades' intended to crush their resistance and extinguish their beliefs, which the Pope had labelled heretical. Due largely to Žižka's innovation, the Hussites developed war wagons, heavy weapons that essentially served as early tanks or personnel carriers. These were typically horse-drawn wagons previously used for hauling goods that were adapted as weapons with both offensive and defensive capabilities.

The heavy wooden wagons often transported more than 20 warriors armed with pikes, bow and arrow, flails, primitive firearms and other weapons. The wagons were sometimes chained together to form a strongpoint that was effective against enemy infantry and horsemen, particularly knights who were vulnerable when their horses were disabled, causing them to tumble to the ground. Once in place, the war wagon's rear door was opened, allowing the deployment of some of its occupants, while others fired through ports in the wooden sides. Wagons were usually positioned on open terrain where natural features protected their flanks or served as anchors for offensive envelopments. The tabors, as they came to be known, could be disassembled and relocated swiftly, providing the advantage of mobility.

The concept of the war wagon became common in numerous armies during the 15th century. However, the advent of accurate, heavy-calibre, field artillery saw its demise as a primary weapon.



Modified war machine

The typical Hussite wooden war wagon was modified to provide protection for its complement of soldiers. Wide boards were placed along the sides for additional strength against enemy fire. A roof-like covering was also attached and could be raised into position for soldiers to shoot arrows or fire handguns, primitive firearms developed after the introduction of gunpowder, through triangular ports or firing slits cut into the planks.

A mobile battlement

Around 16 to 22 Hussite troops usually manned a war wagon, including up to eight crossbowmen, two handgunners, eight soldiers armed with pikes or flails, and four shield carriers and drivers. Some quickly dispersed outside the confines of the wagon as the enemy approached, while others fought from inside. After the enemy had spent its momentum against the strong defensive positions, the soldiers advanced and put their adversaries to flight.

Raised ramparts

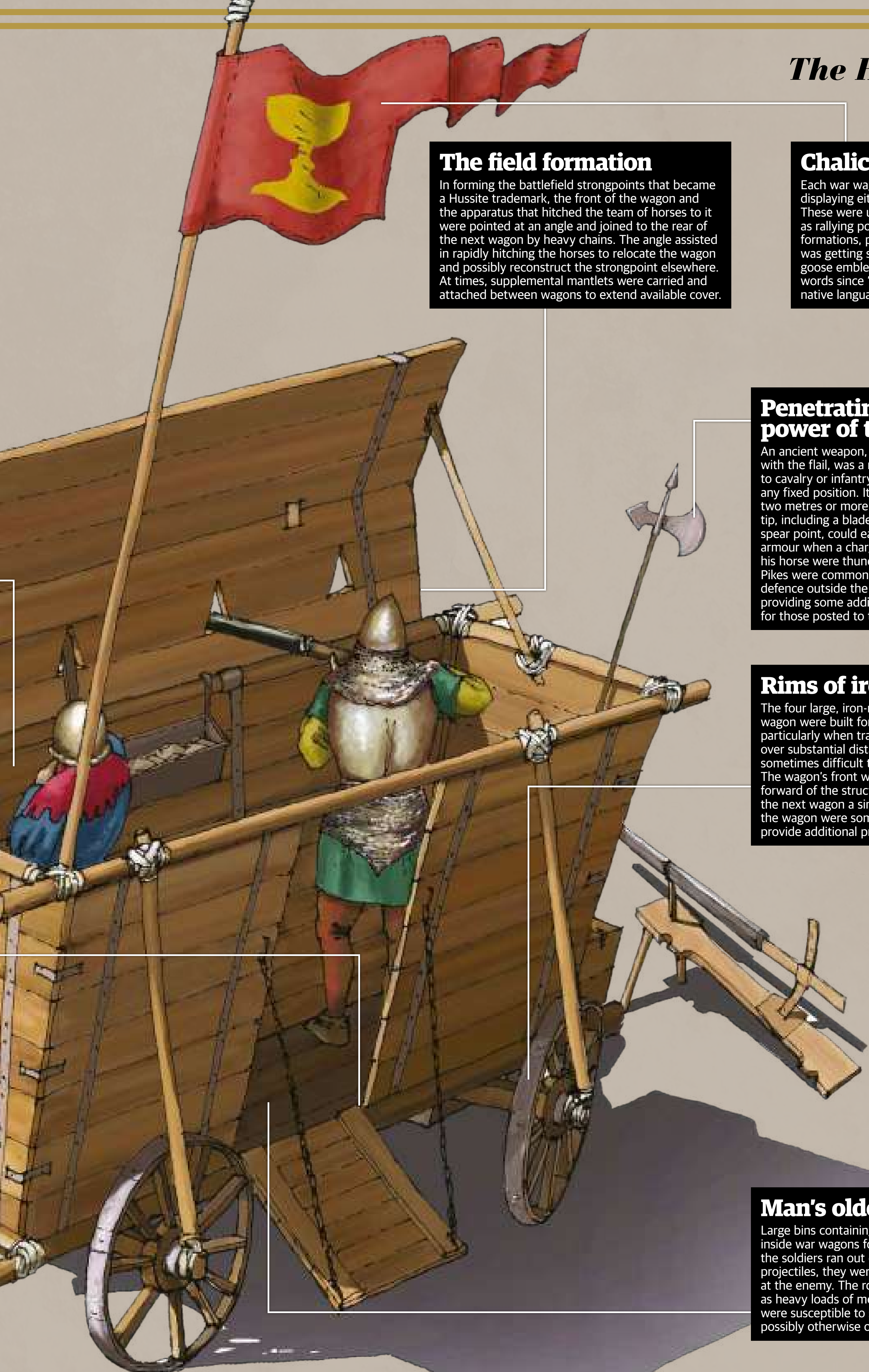
The height of the war wagon was at least one metre above the floor. Including the clearance for the wheels, the entire wagon was elevated well over 1.5 metres above the ground. When time permitted, slight trenches were dug to protect the wheels – vital to the wagon's mobility – from sustaining battle damage. A plank could also be lowered from the wagon floor, allowing soldiers to fire through ports from underneath the wagon itself.

Rear exit for rapid deployment

As the war wagon developed, a rear door was often added. Turned away from the enemy, the door facilitated rapid ingress and egress from the wagon. As soldiers became accustomed to the movement, they exited more quickly to assume positions and await the enemy attack or to execute an envelopment as the wagons anchored the Hussite flanks.

Cannon inside or out

Small cannon called culverins were carried aboard some war wagons and either fired from inside the wagon itself or manhandled into the defensive perimeter and advantageous firing positions. As they became larger and more powerful, culverins also proved the undoing of the war wagon after a century of widespread usage in central Europe. Wooden walls could not stand up to the concentrated fire of heavier weapons.



The field formation

In forming the battlefield strongpoints that became a Hussite trademark, the front of the wagon and the apparatus that hitched the team of horses to it were pointed at an angle and joined to the rear of the next wagon by heavy chains. The angle assisted in rapidly hitching the horses to relocate the wagon and possibly reconstruct the strongpoint elsewhere. At times, supplemental mantlets were carried and attached between wagons to extend available cover.

Chalice or goose

Each war wagon flew a pennant banner displaying either a goose or a chalice. These were used for identification, as rallying points, and to signal other formations, possibly when a column was getting started in the field. The goose emblem was actually a play on words since 'Huss' meant 'goose' in the native language of the day.

Penetrating power of the pike

An ancient weapon, the pike, along with the flail, was a reliable deterrent to cavalry or infantry charges against any fixed position. Its length, often two metres or more, and strong tip, including a blade, spike and spear point, could easily penetrate armour when a charging knight and his horse were thundering forward. Pikes were commonly used in defence outside the war wagons, providing some additional security for those posted to the interior.

Rims of iron

The four large, iron-rimmed wheels of the war wagon were built for sturdiness and speed, particularly when traversing rugged terrain over substantial distances. Repairs were sometimes difficult to complete in the field. The wagon's front wheels projected slightly forward of the structure to make chaining to the next wagon a simpler process. The sides of the wagon were somewhat sloped outward to provide additional protection for the wheels.

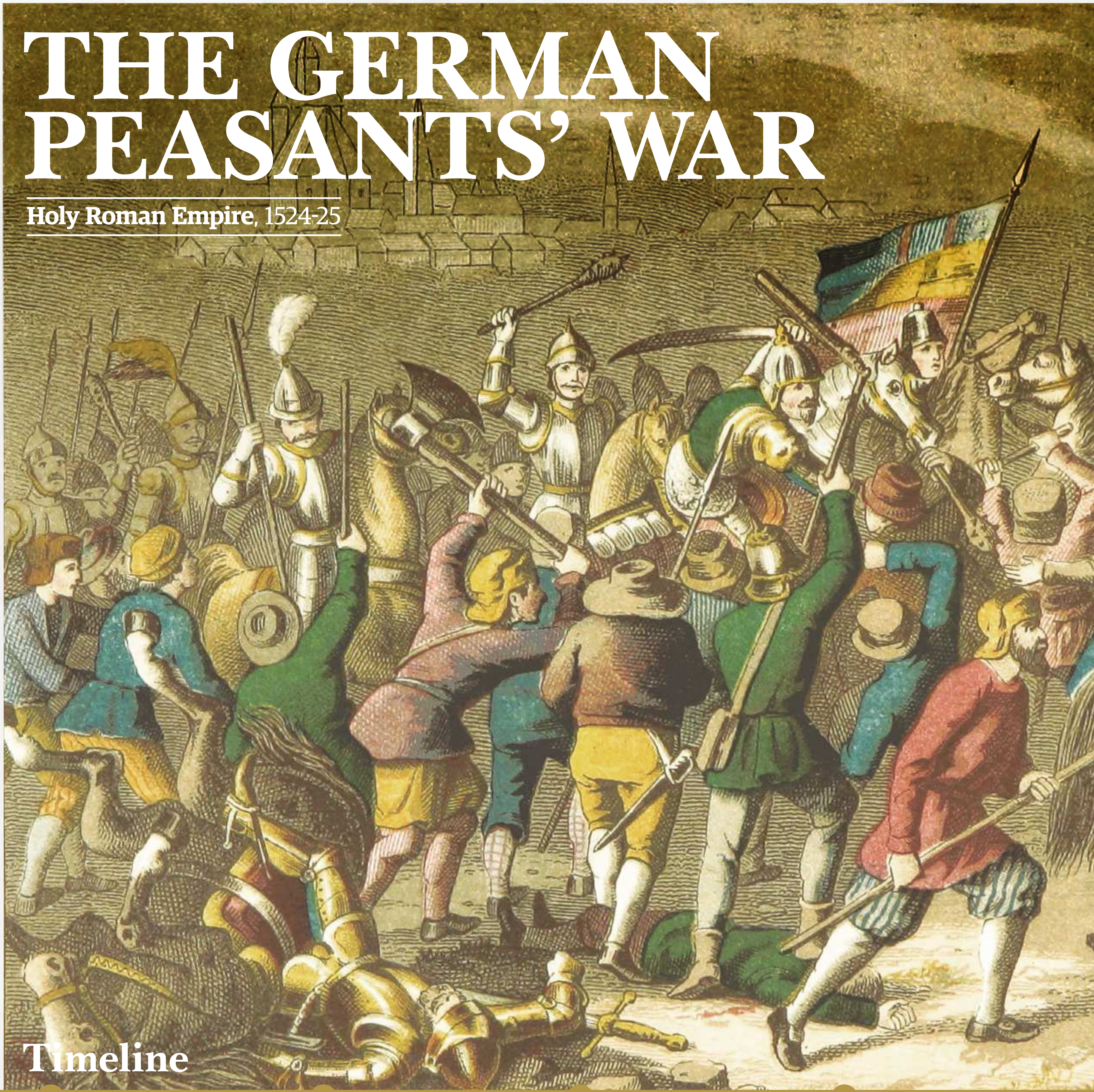
Man's oldest weapon

Large bins containing rocks were constructed inside war wagons for two reasons. When the soldiers ran out of arrows, gunpowder or projectiles, they were directed to hurl rocks at the enemy. The rocks also provided ballast as heavy loads of men, arms and equipment were susceptible to shifting and could possibly otherwise overturn the entire wagon.

IMAGE SOURCE: ROCÍO ESPÍN

THE GERMAN PEASANTS' WAR

Holy Roman Empire, 1524-25



Timeline

JUNE 1524

The countess of Lupfen demands a harvest of snail shells from the count's tenants on a holiday. Instead, the peasants raise a banner and create a list of grievances.

6-20 MARCH 1525

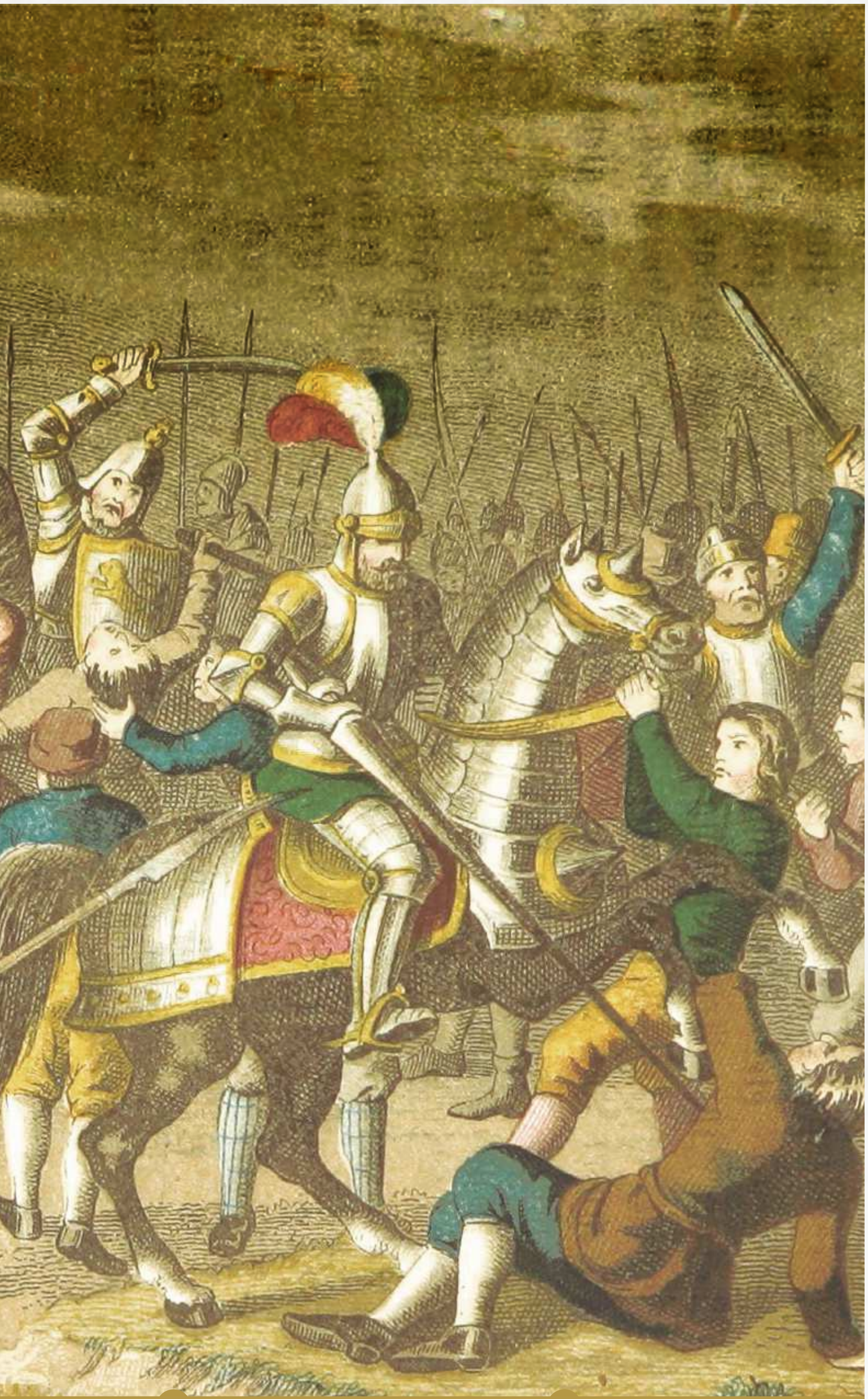
Representatives from the separate groups of peasants meet and discuss a set of common demands. They agree on what is known as the Twelve Articles.

4 APRIL 1525

The peasants attempt to attack the city of Ulm in the Battle of Leipheim. Catching sight of the Swabian League, they attempt to retreat but 1,000 are killed.

13 MAY 1525

The peasants attack Weinsberg Castle, achieving victory and taking the count prisoner. They execute him along with 70 other nobles, but this causes a divide among the peasants.



29 APRIL 1525

Der Saale
Frankenhau

The Battle of Frankenhausen sees the peasants defeated in battle against the armies of Phillip I of Hesse and George, Duke of Saxony. Mützner is captured and killed shortly after.

SEPTEMBER 1525

The remains of the rebellion are put down and many peasants return to their farms. The peasant movement has ultimately failed.

WHAT WAS IT?

Following a period of unrest and economic trouble, peasants in the German-speaking areas of the Holy Roman Empire rose up against the Catholic Church and landowners. The rebellion began in June 1524 at Stühlingen when 1,000 men created a list of grievances, but by October more peasants had risen up in large numbers around most of southwest Germany.

Representatives of the rebels came together in Memmingen to find a common goal and created the Twelve Articles. This list of demands included free access to fish and game, release from serfdom, the right for a community to choose and depose its own pastor. Published and printed, the Twelve Articles spread rapidly throughout Germany, sparking a series of battles and massacres. Most ended in the peasants' defeat. When the war ended, more than 100,000 had been killed, and the installation of harsh restrictions and terms discouraged further rebellion.

WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

Conditions for peasants had been poor in the years preceding the revolt, with complaints of increasing workloads and high rent as nobles demanded more and more from the tenants and serfs to offset decreased land value. While the Reformation played a large part in the revolt, it did not appear in the first list of demands created by the peasants to rise at Stühlingen. It wasn't until the movement expanded that more religious grievances began to emerge, and the rebels began to use the Lutheran ideas already preached in the towns and villages to find a common non-agrarian cause for war. Lines in the Twelve Articles such as "The Bible proves that we are free, and we want to be free" show inspiration from Luther's work.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Martin Luther

10 November 1483 – 18 February 1546

Translating the Bible into common German, Luther helped inspire the revolt. However, this was unintentional and he actually condemned the actions of the peasants.

Thomas Müntzer

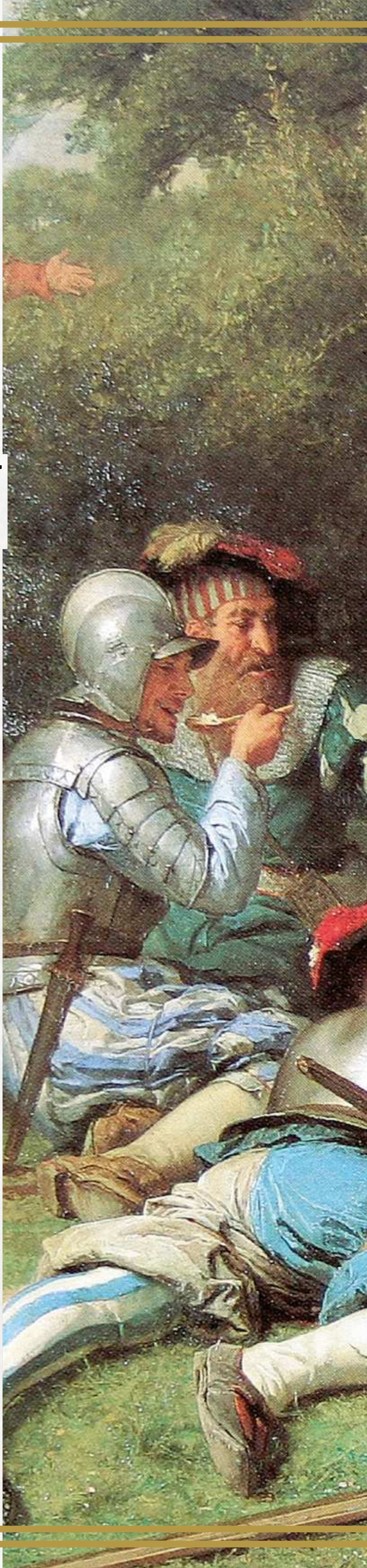
1490 – 27 May 1525

Inspired by Luther's ideas, Müntzer became a leading radical reformer and supporter of the revolt, even personally leading troops in battle.

Georg Truchsess von Waldburg

25 January 1488 – 29 May 1531

Known as "scourge of the peasants" and commander of the Swabian League, Truchsess was known to be harsh and pitiless against the peasants.



THE REFORMATION RESOLVED

Two civil wars, one bloodless, the other sanguinary, decided the future of Switzerland

Words by Edoardo Albert

The world was simmering. Groundbreaking new technology was allowing the spread and dissemination of new ideas faster than ever before. What was worse, the authorities that had previously been able to keep a lid on the passions that these new ideas were rousing were unable to control the spread of information. Everything was spinning out of control. People were starting to align themselves into opposing camps, spreading lies and gossip about their enemies while excusing every exaggeration made by people who shared their beliefs.

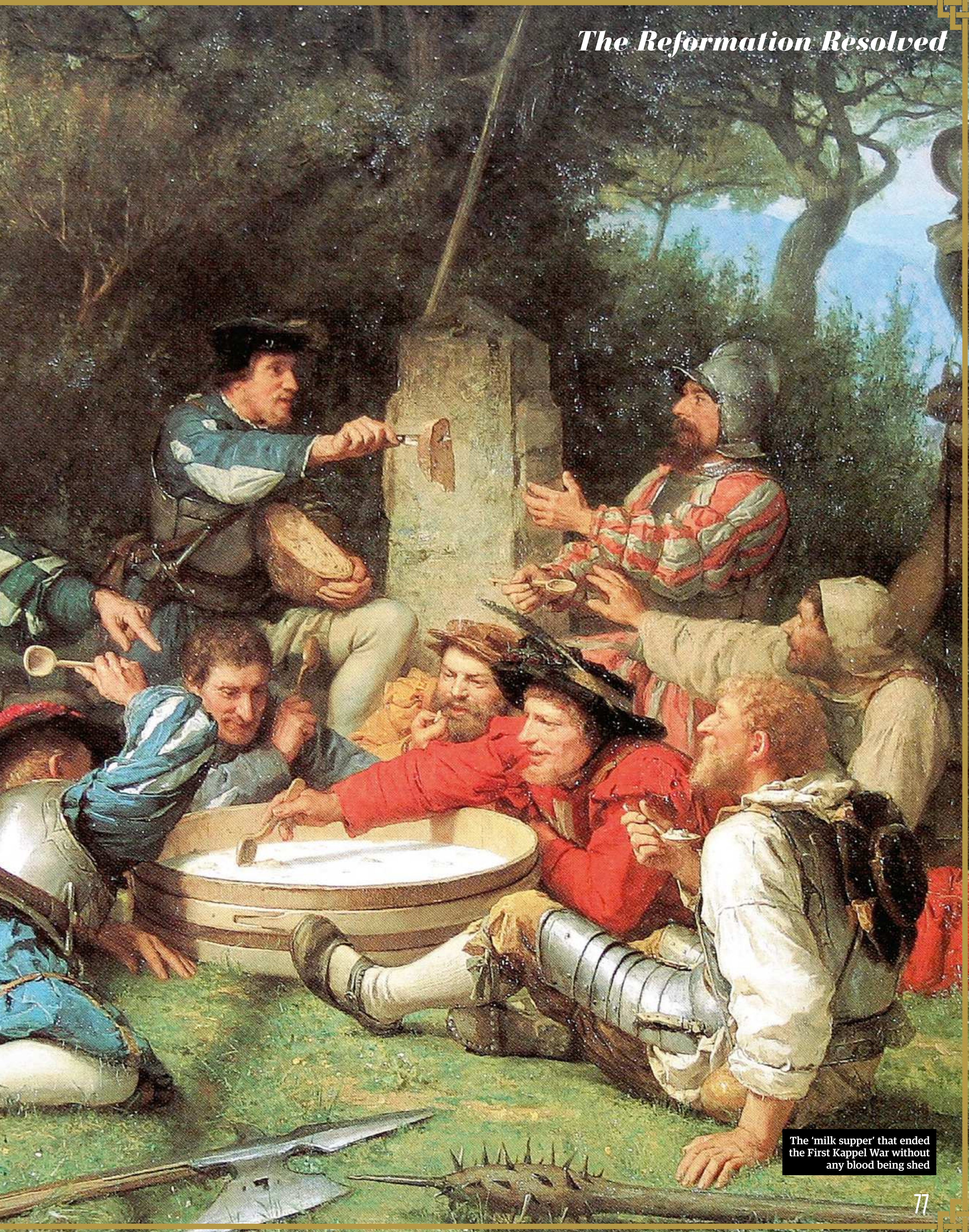
No, it's not the world today; this was Europe early in the 16th century. The revolutionary new technology was the printing press. Invented by Johannes Gutenberg circa 1439, the explosion in the number of printing presses – and books – was astonishing. By 1500, there were already 1,000 printing presses in Europe, and 50 years later there were over 300 printers in Geneva alone. By the end of the 16th century, European printers had produced over 200,000,000 books.

The central place that printers would play in the conflicts that developed in the wake of this explosion of opposing ideas is demonstrated by the Affair of the Sausages. Catholic practice was that, during the penitential season of Lent before Easter, people should abstain from eating meat and practice fasting. But in Zurich, Switzerland, on 9 March 1522, a printer named Christoph Froschauer served a supper of sausages to his workers, exhausted from their labours in printing the Epistles of Saint Paul, and to a guest list drawn from the city's dignitaries and clergy. The supper was a deliberate provocation and defiance of the Catholic Church. Being a printer, Froschauer had read and absorbed many of the new ideas that were circulating in books and, particularly, the pamphlets that were quick and cheap to produce and buy and which had print runs of thousands. Among the guests at the sausage supper was a disillusioned priest named Ulrich Zwingli.

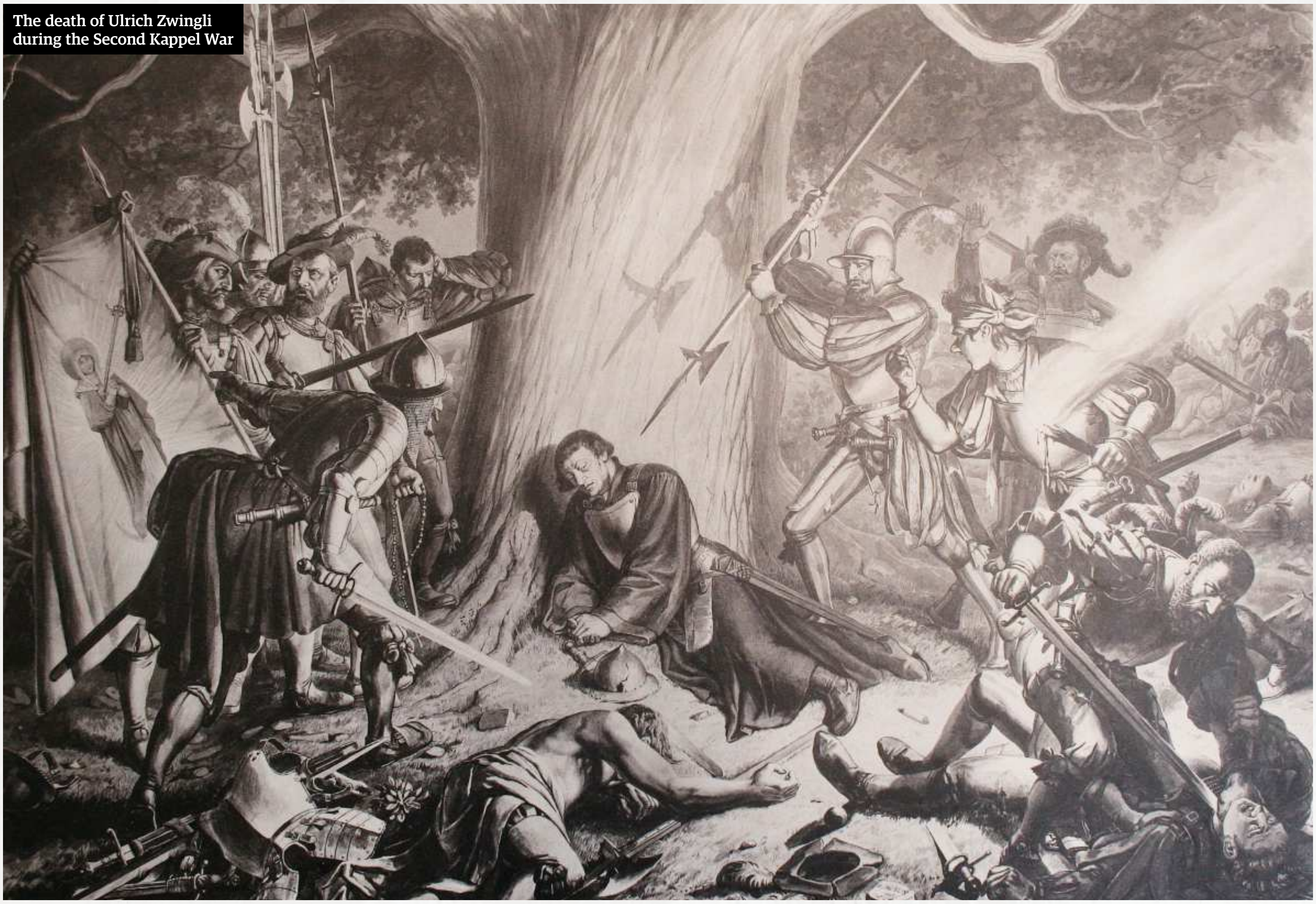
In response to the outcry at the sausage supper, and Froschauer's arrest, Zwingli wrote a swingeing defence of the right of Christians to eat meat during Lent that is taken as the start of the Reformation in Switzerland. With the ground primed by the many printers in Zurich, the Reformation quickly gained ground with Zwingli as its leader, spreading from there to other Swiss cities and towns.

By the middle of the decade, the 13 Swiss cantons were split between Catholic and Protestants. The five alpine cantons – Zug, Lucerne, Unterwalden, Schwyz and Uri – remained staunchly Catholic. But tensions between the two sides were stoked by rivalries over the common territories – that is, districts whose rule changed every six months to a different canton, which meant that administration changed regularly from Protestant to Catholic cantons.

With tensions rising and the polemic flowing from the presses becoming more violent all the time, small incidents could spin rapidly out of control. In particular, Zurich was trying to gain control of the territory of Thurgau in the north east of Switzerland. The bailiff of Thurgau, Marx Wehrli, was a staunch Catholic and unfaltering opponent of Reform but, on a trip to Zurich, he was arrested and then executed on 5 May 1528. Just over a year later, on 29 May 1529, a Reformed missionary named Jacob Kaiser who was



The 'milk supper' that ended the First Kappel War without any blood being shed



The death of Ulrich Zwingli during the Second Kappel War

trying to make converts in the Catholic canton of Schwyz was arrested and burned at the stake.

In Zurich, this was exactly the sort of act that Zwingli was looking for as a justification for war: "Let us be firm and fear not to take up arms. This peace, which some desire so much, is not peace, but war; while the war that we call for, is not war, but peace. We thirst for no man's blood, but we will cut the nerves of the oligarchy. If we shun it, the truth of the gospel and the ministers' lives will never be secure among us."

What would be the first War of Kappel was about to begin. On 8 June, Zurich made the war formal, occupying Thurgau and the lands belonging to the Abbey of Saint Gall before marching to Kappel, a municipality on the border of the Catholic canton of Zug.

However, other forces were working towards a peaceful settlement and as the rival armies marched towards Kappel and war, the Federal Diet of Switzerland was meeting, allowing the representatives of the different cantons to negotiate with each other. At the same time, and aware that their representatives were meeting at the Diet, the two rival armies managed to steer clear of any actions that would provoke the other side. According to one eye-witness, the men from the two armies fraternised freely, drinking and talking together. The 'milk soup of Kappel' became proverbial as an example of cooperation between Swiss cantons, for according to later accounts, the men of Zurich provided the bread and the men of Zug the milk for a meal they shared together. At the Federal Diet, a peace agreement was signed that required the Catholic cantons to dissolve the defensive alliance they had formed with the Habsburgs. So the First War of Kappel proved to be the best sort of conflict: one in which no lives were lost.

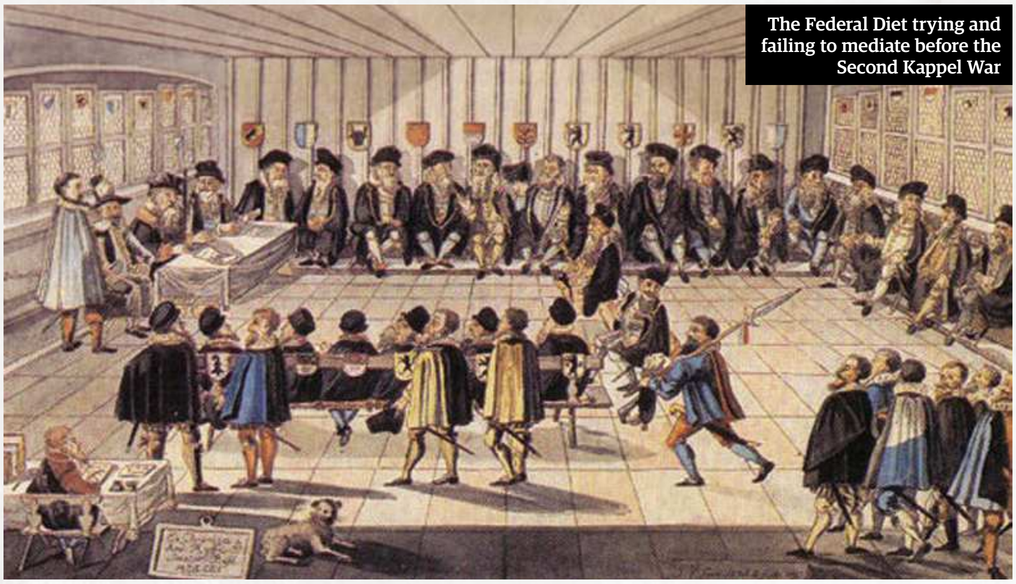
However, tensions had not been defused between the two sides and they escalated during the next two years. For his part, Zwingli was convinced that war was inevitable - indeed, he regarded it as necessary and justifiable so that the Reformed faith could spread through all the cantons of Switzerland. At a meeting on 12 May 1531, Zwingli attempted to convince the other Reformed cantons to declare war on their Catholic counterparts, but his arguments were rejected.

Undeterred by his failure to bring the other Reformed cantons along with them, the Zurichers enacted an embargo against the mountainous Catholic cantons, cutting off deliveries of food as well as salt. With this existential threat to their existence, the Catholics had little choice. On 9 October 1531, they declared war on Zurich. The Second Kappel War had begun.

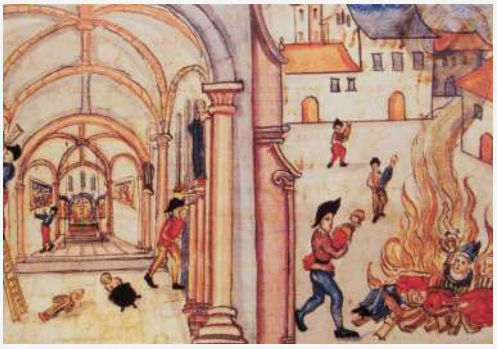
Having decided on war, the Catholic territories moved fast. Manning the mountain passes to stop word of their preparations leaking through to Zurich, the Catholics amassed an army of some 8,000 men in Lucerne and began to march, reaching Kappel on 11 October 1531. There, they found a small force of approximately 2,000 men waiting for them.

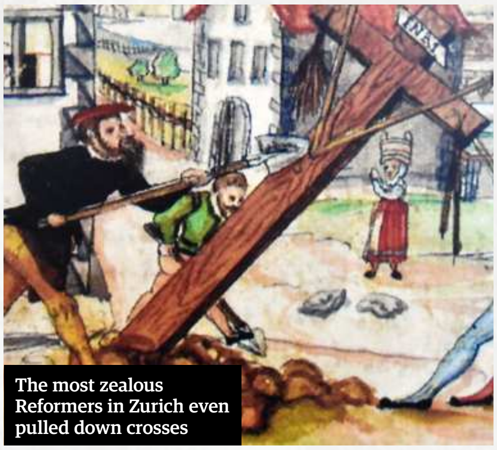
Although the Zurichers had provoked the war, its outbreak caught the city council completely by surprise. Not having the time to call for reinforcements from the other Protestant cantons, the council had assembled a scratch force and sent them to Kappel to try to hold the pass while they gathered fresh troops to reinforce them.

Zwingli travelled with the reinforcing army as one of its pastors but it was not the formidable force he might have hoped, consisting of only about 1,800 men. What was worse, the reinforcements had to force march to get to Kappel, so they arrived exhausted and disorganised, with little in the way of artillery. However, the Zurichers had the advantage of already holding the most favourable ground, from

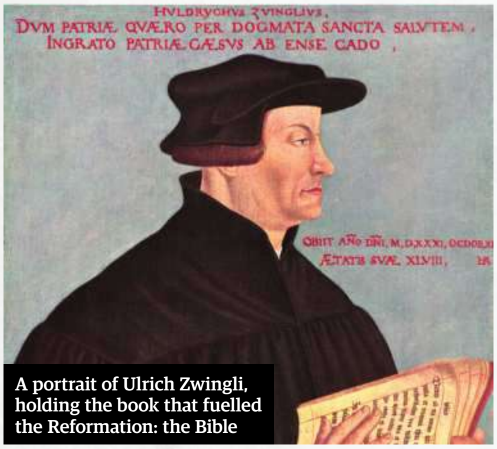


The Federal Diet trying and failing to mediate before the Second Kappel War





The most zealous Reformers in Zurich even pulled down crosses


HVLDRYCHVS ZVINGLIVS,
DVM PATRIÆ QVÆRO PER DOGMATA SANCTA SALVTEM,
INGRATO PATRIÆ CÆSVS AB ENSE CADO,
OBIIT AÑO DÑI, M,D,XXXI, OCTOB
ÆTATIS SVÆ XLVIII,

A portrait of Ulrich Zwingli, holding the book that fuelled the Reformation: the Bible

which they could oversee the approaching enemy army and bring fire down on its head.

The Zurich forces were under the command of Georg Göldli, and as the Catholic army approached, he unleashed a cannonade upon the advance guard that convinced them they were facing a formidable, and formidably entrenched, enemy. As the afternoon was drawing down towards evening, the Catholic soldiers retrenched. Seeing them do so, Göldli assumed hostilities were done for the day. However, the leader of the Catholics, Provost Jauch of Uri Canton, decided to reconnoitre in person the enemy positions. Doing so, he immediately saw that the Zurich army was much less formidable than he had been told. What's more, it was in the middle of retreating to a better position.

This was the perfect moment in which to strike. Jauch assembled a volunteer force of 400 men and led them in an attack against the Zurichers. Hearing combat start in the wood-covered slopes of the mountain, the rest of the Catholics began piling in. The Zurich army, caught out of position and exhausted from the effort of marching to Kappel against the clock, collapsed after only 15 minutes of fighting. Instead of being an organised fighting force, they quickly became a panicked rabble, fleeing the battlefield in an attempt to save their skins.

The greatest risk a soldier faces is when, routed, he turns and runs. Back exposed, fear dulling any rational thought, he is an open target to an enemy emboldened and vengeful. In the rout that followed, some 500 men of the 2,000 making up the Zurich army were killed and injured. Among the dead was the man who had fomented the war, Ulrich Zwingli. Wounded during the fighting, he was cut down by a soldier who, amid the carnage, didn't even realise who he was killing. But after the battle, Zwingli's body was found. The victors burned his corpse.

The loss of the Second Kappel War ensured that the Catholic cantons would not be dominated by the Protestant ones. The peace treaty that finally ended hostilities gave Catholics priority in the common cantons but allowed those that had already converted to Protestantism to remain Protestant, and gave cantons the freedom to follow whichever religion they preferred in their own territories. As such, the settlement prefigured the principle, known as 'cuius regio, eius religio', that was declared at the peace of Augsburg in 1555, where the religion of the ruler dictated the religion of the ruled.

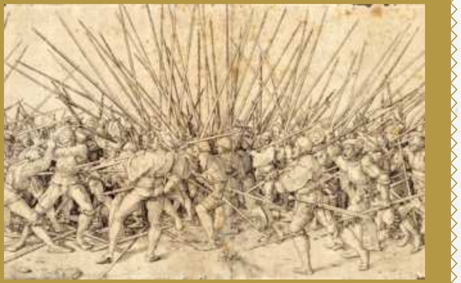
SWISS MERCENARIES

Before chocolate and watches, the Swiss were famous for their soldiers

Among the many reforms Zwingli wanted enacted was an end to the Swiss practice of hiring themselves out as mercenaries. For the burghers of Zurich, a town that had grown rich on commerce, the prospect of marching off to fight in a foreign war for money held no attraction whatsoever, and they were happy for the ending of the custom. But for the Catholic cantons, which were in the more mountainous and poorer regions of Switzerland, the income from a son going off to fight in foreign wars had kept many a family from starving during a bad winter and late spring.

The Swiss had perfected a form of warfare based on formations of infantry wielding long pikes that had seen them taken into service during many of the wars of 14th and 15th centuries. Swiss mercenaries generally deployed in columns and simply rolled over the enemy. With the column bristling with 20-foot-long pikes, it was invulnerable to cavalry attacks and could simply bulldoze the enemy.

However, as artillery and handguns became more common and their rate of fire improved, the Swiss pike column became vulnerable. The Battle of Bicocca on 27 April 1522 saw the first major defeat for Swiss pike columns as the pikemen were cut down by the massed use of firearms. However, Swiss mercenaries continued to serve for the next three centuries until 1859. Now, there remains only one Swiss mercenary unit: the Swiss Guard that protects the pope.



The carnage of a pike attack by Swiss mercenaries is clearly conveyed in this drawing by Hans Holbein

THE FRENCH WARS OF RELIGION

A religious movement so strong that it divided France into bitter rival camps

Words by Derek Wilson

In 1550, the Reformation theologian John Calvin wrote to his followers in the southern French city of Montelimar: "We beg you to show restraint… We do not see why you think it necessary to move so rapidly. It will be enough if you try to confirm the congregation in the faith and otherwise keep quiet." It was the very success of his movement that gave rise to Calvin's anxiety and his subsequent efforts to quell fanaticism.

He had begun preaching his version of Evangelical Christianity - based on the Bible rather than Roman Catholic tradition - 14 years earlier in Geneva. During that time, his movement had spread with alacrity in the Swiss states and in his native France.

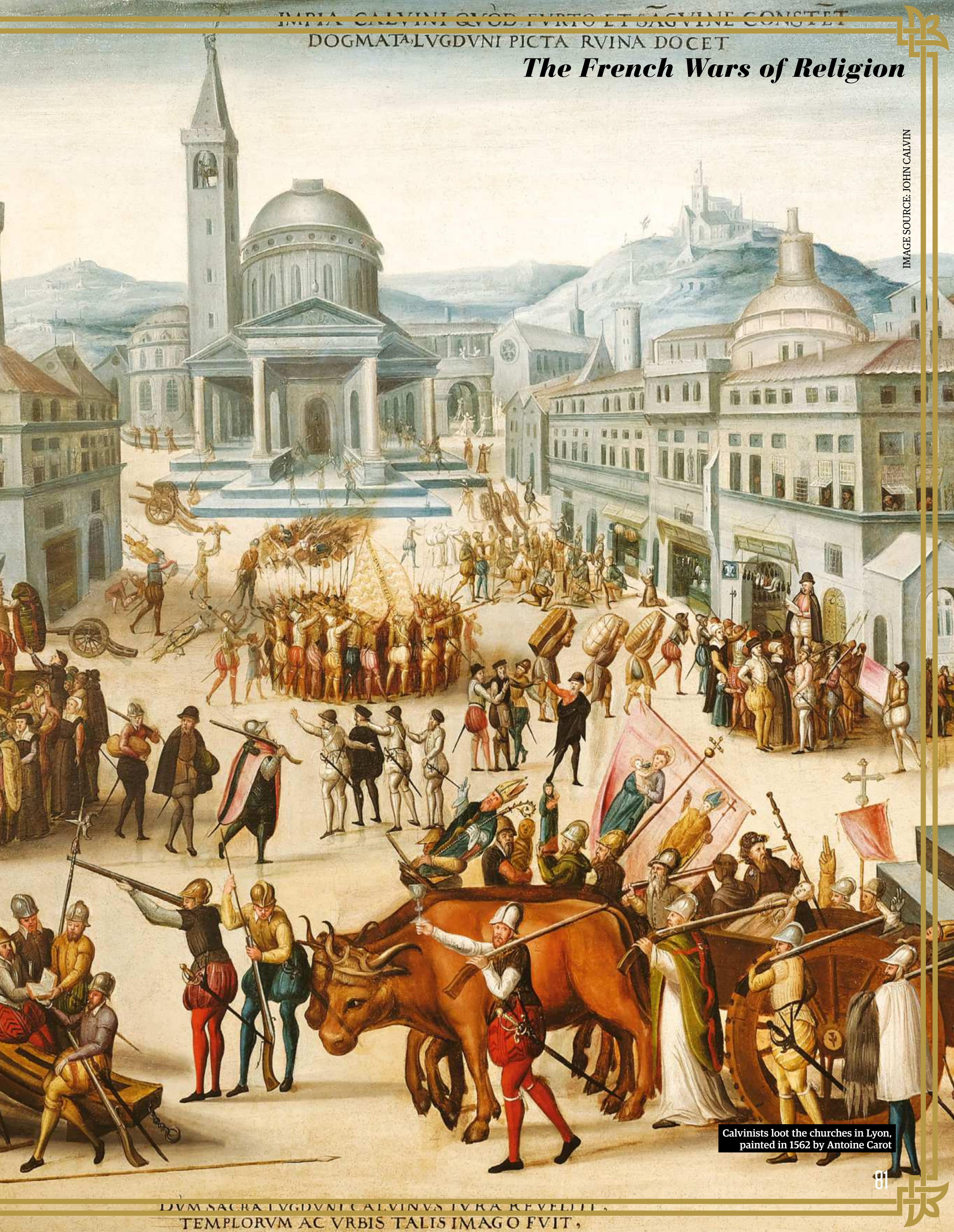
According to one estimate, by 1560 there were more than 2,000 Calvinist churches in France. Their very existence and the message preached from their pulpits challenged the doctrine and practice of the state religion. Inevitably, this provoked a reaction from civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Hundreds of Calvinists were imprisoned, tried and, if found guilty, condemned to death by burning. Calvin's anxiety is, therefore, not surprising.

The emergence of a religious movement so strong that it divided France into bitter rival camps, split apart families and communities and made martyrs of countless men and women requires explanation. There were, in fact, several causes for the origins of the movement and for the circumstances that enabled it to spread. Complex as they were, it may be helpful to list them under three headings: religious, theological and political.

Religious discontent had frequently manifested itself in various places over the preceding two centuries. Anticlericalism had its roots in the resentment felt by the laity at the privileged position enjoyed by the clergy, who were largely exempt from trial in civil courts and relied on various levies imposed on parishioners for part of their income. They were, in many cases, poorly educated and ill-equipped to teach and preach. Some regular clergy and members of religious orders set a poor moral example, and bawdy jokes about priests, monks and nuns, though possibly exaggerated, were common in inns and market places. Higher up the social scale, bishops and cardinals enjoyed wealth and exercised power on a par with nobles. While secular and religious 'princes' normally worked together to control and lead society, there were often clashes over the exercise of authority.

From time to time, criticism of the clergy led to more profound theological protest. Reformers like John Wycliffe in England, Jan Hus in Bohemia, Martin Luther in Saxony and Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich challenged traditional Church teaching and practice. Several heretical movements had existed over the centuries but these later, and highly influential, reformers shared certain basic convictions that struck at the root of papal authority. They taught that the Bible, and not the ecclesiastical hierarchy, was the only source of Christian doctrine, that it should be available in vernacular translations for all to read, and that the organisation of the Church should be based on the pattern laid down in the New Testament.

Calvin took this new teaching much further in his monumental *Institution of the Christian Religion* (commonly known as *Institutes*), which was a complete summary of Christian doctrine and a framework for the working of a Christian nation. This challenge to the politico-religious status quo appealed particularly to radical elements within society and could not fail to alarm the leaders of Church and state.


IMPIA CALVINI QVOD FVRTO ET SAGVINE CONSTET
DOGMATA LVGDVNI PICTA RVINA DOCET
DVM SACRA LVGDVNI CALVINVS IVRA REVELLIT
TEMPLORVM AC VRBIS TALIS IMAGO FVIT.

Calvinists loot the churches in Lyon, painted in 1562 by Antoine Carot

IMAGE SOURCE: JOHN CALVIN

JOHN CALVIN

The tiny-mind reformer

John Calvin was, first and foremost, a man of brilliant intellect. As a young teenager in 1534, he left his home town of Noyon in Picardy to study in Paris, but his father soon moved him to Orléans to train in law. However, he was drawn more strongly to teachers following the radical thinking of Luther and other reformers and, as soon as his father died, he returned to Paris, where he devoted himself to the free-thinking humanist curriculum associated with Erasmus and Bishop Briçonnet of Meaux.

He soon fell under suspicion of heresy. After the Affair of the Placards he fled France in 1535 and eventually settled in Geneva, Switzerland. In 1536 he published the first edition of his systematic theology, Institutes of the Christian Religion. Calvin took the Bible as his sole authority in matters of faith and applied his tidy lawyer's mind to setting forth a precise evangelical theology. He also set out a politico-religious ordinance for the organisation of a Christian state. This was deemed too extreme for the civic authorities and Calvin was forced to leave for Strasbourg.

However, the mood in Geneva changed, and in 1541 he was invited back. Empowered to propose and enforce ordinances covering all aspects of public religious belief and authority, Calvin presided over a tightly disciplined polity. Education was controlled by the Genevan Academy and all aspects of public morality and order were overseen by the Consistory. Calvin's Geneva was designed to be a perfect Christian commonwealth in which all members were forced to be perfect. This restrictive programme was never fully accepted by all Genevans, but its very comprehensiveness, backed by the complete theology of the Institutes (constantly enlarged and revised in four Latin editions and translated into French and other languages), made it appeal to many who wished to live a truly Christian life. The 'Reformed' faith had become a powerful force in France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Scotland and elsewhere by the time of Calvin's death in 1564.

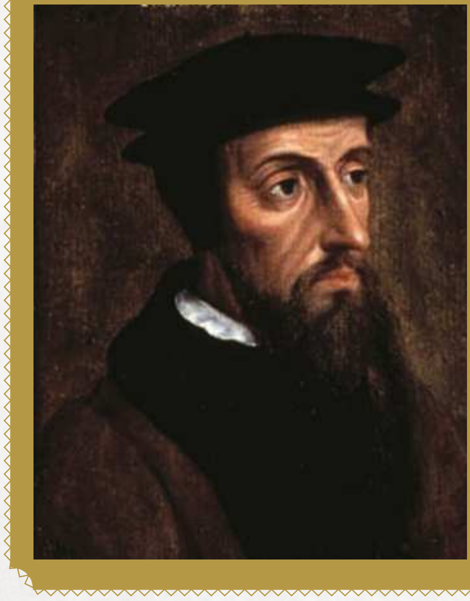
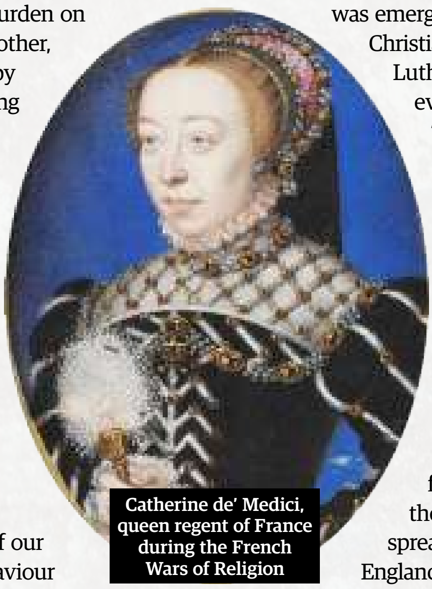


IMAGE SOURCE: MUSEUM CATHARIJNECONVENT



Catherine de' Medici, queen regent of France during the French Wars of Religion

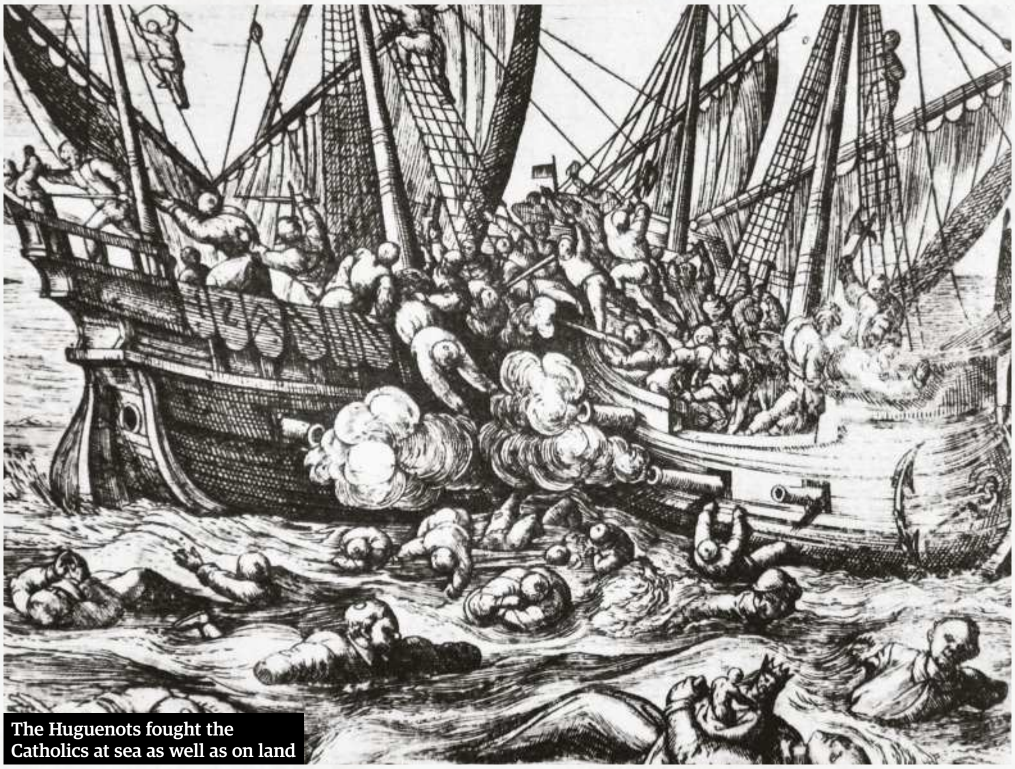
IMAGE SOURCE: FRANÇOIS CLOUET

One other factor exacerbated the situation. In 1559, the French king Henry II died as the result of a jousting accident at the age of 40. He left a widow, the Italian-born Catherine de' Medici, and four underage sons, three of whom (Francis II d.1560, Charles IX d.1574 and Henry III d.1589) assumed the throne in turns and died without producing a male heir. Political instability placed a constant burden on the shoulders of the queen mother, who, in turn, was influenced by aristocratic dynasties competing for influence.

The first portent of politico-religious strife occurred in October 1534. A well-planned campaign led to the distribution of posters during a single night in Paris, Rouen, Tours, Blois and Orléans. They bore the title "Genuine articles on the horrific, great and unbearable abuses of the papal mass, invented directly contrary to the Holy Supper of our Lord sole mediator and sole saviour Jesus Christ". The placards aimed a dart at the Catholic doctrine of the mass on which the power of the clergy over the laity rested. If this blatant challenge by headstrong religious radicals was intended to raise a standard to which other dissidents could rally, it failed in the short term. King Francis I, who had hitherto adopted a lenient attitude towards religious extremists, now reaffirmed his Catholic credentials and ordered a hunt for the originators of the placards. 200 suspects were rounded up and 24 were burned at the stake. Many more, like Calvin, fled to safe havens abroad. In places like Geneva, Zurich and Basel, they were succoured by fellow radicals. There was no agreed evangelical manifesto and the anti-Catholics differed among themselves on some matters of doctrine, but what was emerging was an international Christian movement, distinct from Lutheranism, which would eventually be known as 'Reformed'. It was in order to define the beliefs of this community that Calvin wrote his *Institutes*.

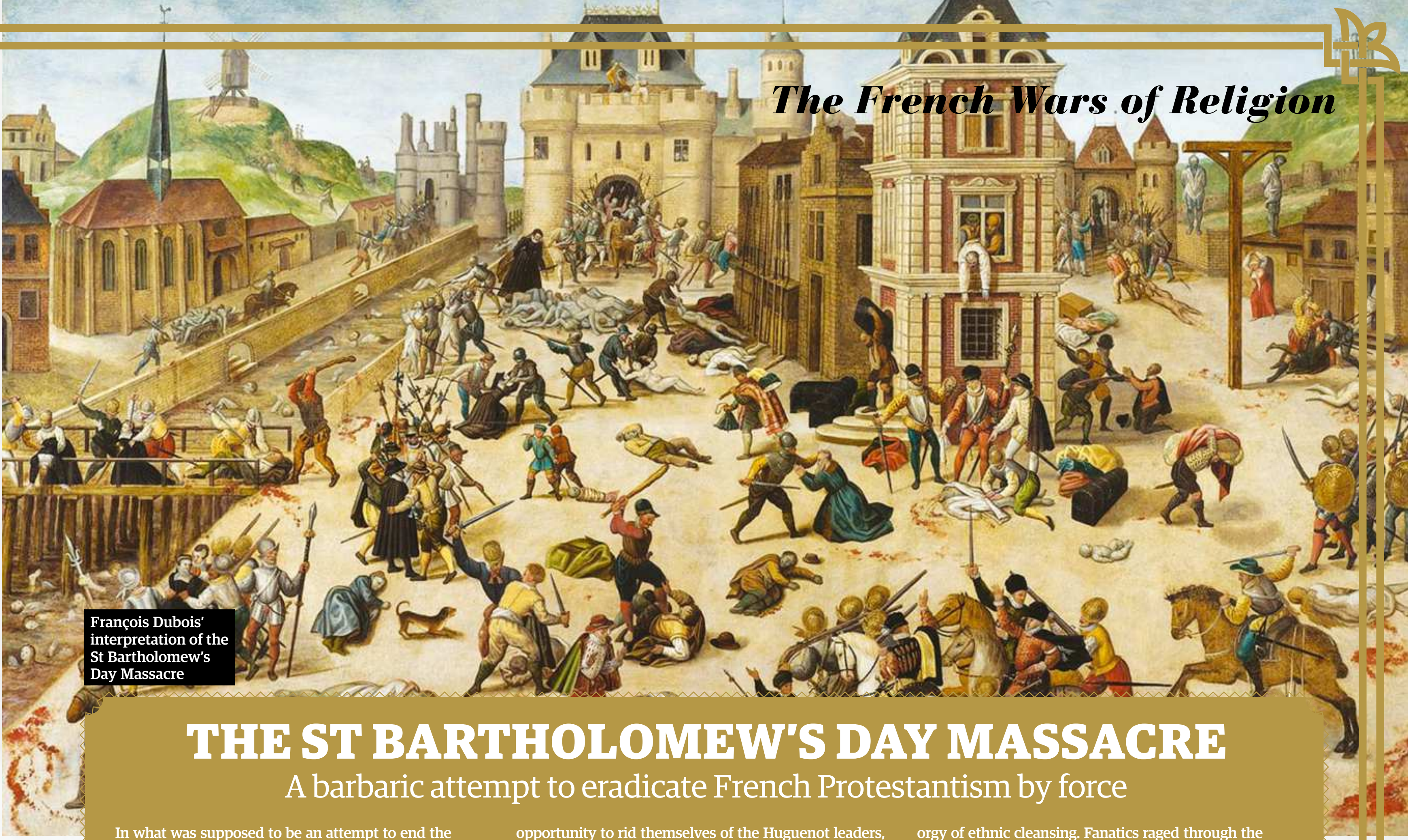
This new heresy was a bigger threat to the established religion than anything that had gone before for several reasons, one of which being its international nature. Versions of the Reformed faith took root in lands from the Alps to the Baltics and spread across the North Sea to England and Scotland. The growing numbers of Reformed Christians in lands close to the French borders encouraged the spread of the new faith within France. They became known as 'Huguenots'. The origin of the name is disputed, but it was certainly a term of abuse applied to the Calvinists by the Catholic majority.

Reformed Christians could boast a doctrinal corpus as comprehensive as that held by the Catholics. Calvin's *Institutes* grew over consecutive



The Huguenots fought the Catholics at sea as well as on land

IMAGE SOURCE: RICHARD VERSTEGAN



François Dubois' interpretation of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre

THE ST BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY MASSACRE

A barbaric attempt to eradicate French Protestantism by force

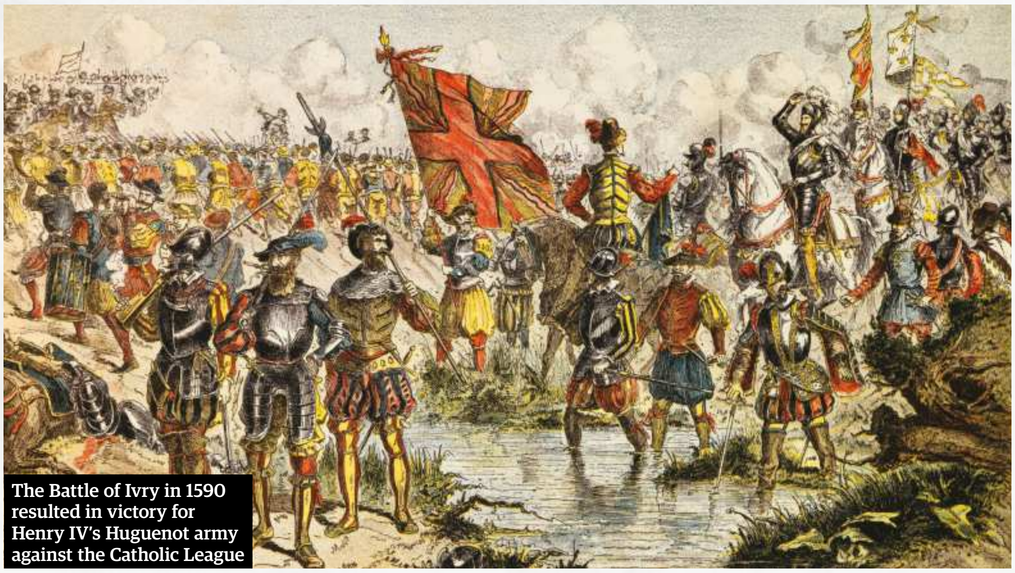
In what was supposed to be an attempt to end the French Wars of Religion, a marriage was arranged between Marguerite, the Catholic sister of Charles IX, and the Calvinist King Henry of Navarre. The wedding took place on 18 August 1572 and all the leaders of the two contending parties were in Paris for the celebrations. Yet the intentions of some of those present were not entirely friendly.

So intense were the hatreds on each side that the French king and his mother could not forego an opportunity to rid themselves of the Huguenot leaders, and they duly arranged for Admiral Gaspard II de Coligny to be shot. In the event, he was only wounded, but this alarmed all his co-religionists. Now it was the turn of the royalists to be alarmed.

Fearing a Protestant backlash, they decided to act first. Their hastily made plans got quickly out of control. On St Bartholomew's day, 24 August, Coligny was murdered in his bedroom and his body thrown out of the window. This became the signal for a Catholic orgy of ethnic cleansing. Fanatics raged through the streets, breaking into houses and butchering every Huguenot they could find. Thousands perished and the Seine was littered with floating bodies.

As news spread, similar massacres occurred in other cities. Statistics cannot provide an accurate estimate of the numbers killed, but certainly many thousands were brutally murdered. In addition, thousands more fled to other lands. One fact is quite clear: this atrocity did not end the French Wars of Religion.

editions into a theological compendium on a par with the *Summa Theologica* of the great 13th-century doctor of the Church, Thomas Aquinas. By the 1560s it had been translated from the original Latin into several European languages, thus making it accessible to literate lay people. The *Institutes* went far beyond pure spiritual instruction; it presented a blueprint for the perfect Christian society that covered the relations between civil and ecclesiastical law and temporal and religious authority. French readers were also able to study vernacular Scripture, the Bible having been translated into French by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples in 1530 and improved by Pierre Olivétan in 1535.

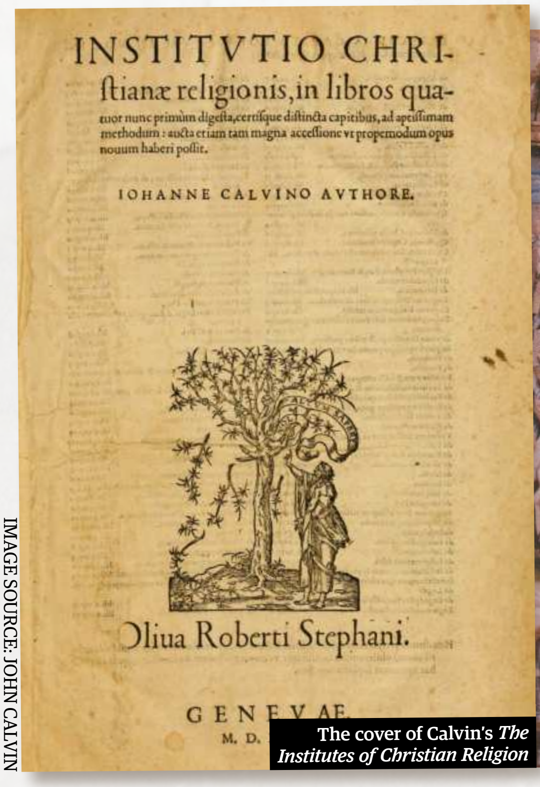


The Battle of Ivry in 1590 resulted in victory for Henry IV's Huguenot army against the Catholic League

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES

Another reason for the rapid spread of Calvinism was the existence of political and social tensions within France. Unrest among the lower orders expressed itself in resentment of oppression by landlords and taxation by the government. What the *Institutes* did was provide religious backing for radical socio-political change and the creation of a Christian 'commonwealth'. There was also rivalry between noble dynasties for influence at the royal court. Just as in England families like the Howards, Seymours and Dudleys competed for power over the crown, so in France there were clashes between the ducal Guise family and that of Anne (a man) de Montmorency, Constable of France. The Guises aligned themselves with the Catholic cause, and some of Montmorency's relatives – notably his nephew, Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France – became key figureheads of the Huguenot opposition.

These rivalries were given more importance by the misfortunes of the royal family. On the death of Francis I in 1547, his son succeeded as Henry II. It was his fatal tilt-yard accident that created



INSTITVTIO CHRI-
ſtianæ religionis, in libros qua-
tuor nunc primùm digeſta, certiſque diſtincta capitibus, ad aptiſſimam
methodum: aucta etiam tam magna acceſſione vt propemodum opus
nouum haberi poſſit.

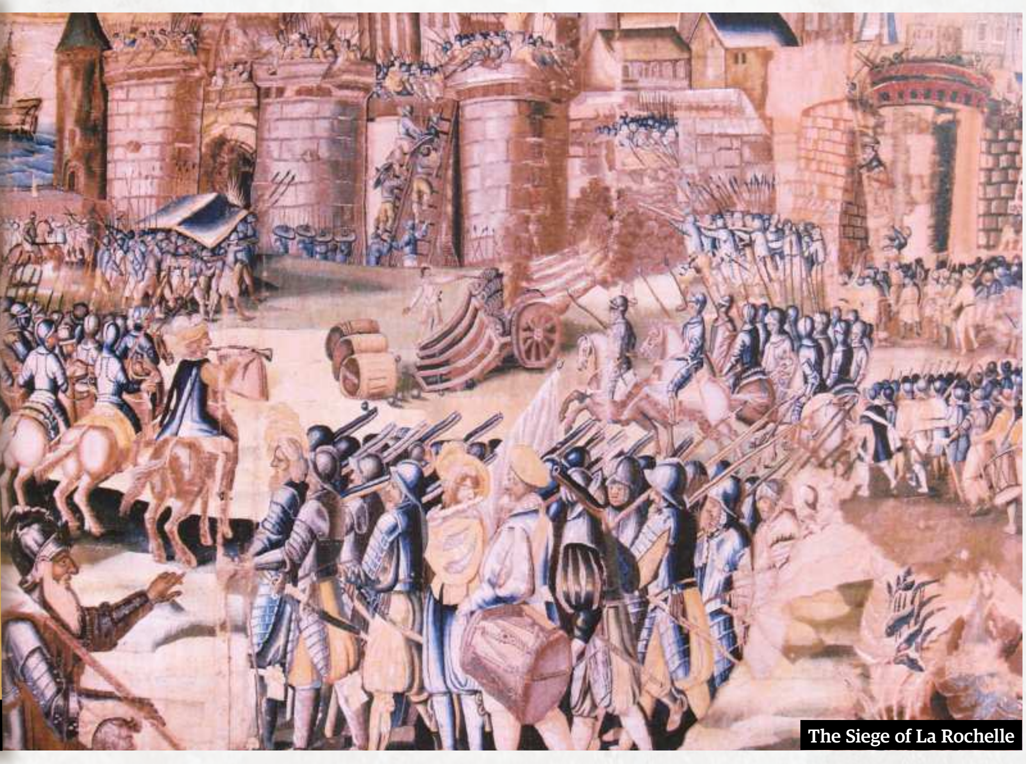
IOHANNE CALVINO AVTHORE.

Oliua Roberti Stephani.

GENEVAE.
M. D.

The cover of Calvin's *The Institutes of Christian Religion*

IMAGE SOURCE: JOHN CALVIN

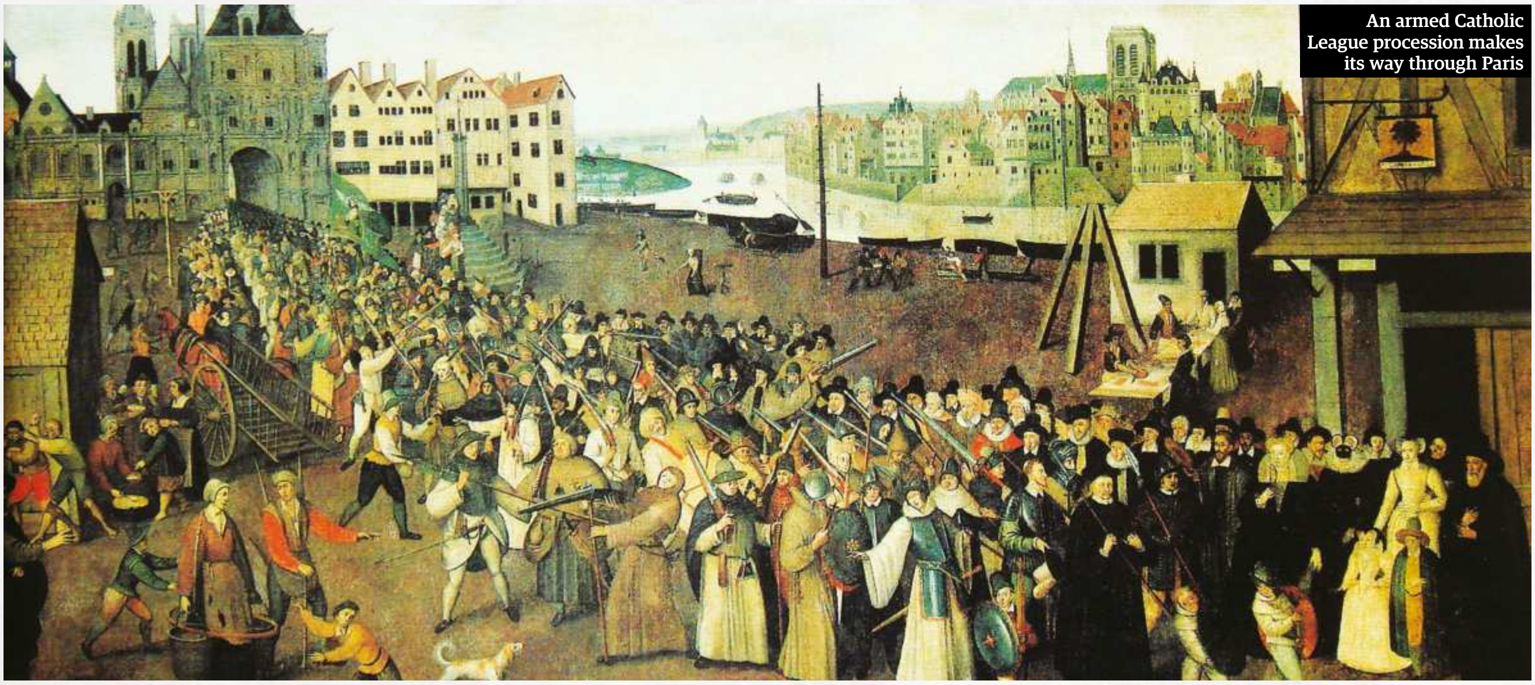


The Siege of La Rochelle

a power vacuum at the centre of French life. The new teenage king, Francis II, closely allied to the Guise family, only survived his father by 17 months, dying in December 1560, probably of a brain tumour. That left Catherine de' Medici ruling in the name of her ten-year-old son, Charles IX, though the real powers behind the throne were Francis, Duke of Guise, and his brother, Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine. Catherine, widely unpopular because of her Italian origins, tried to hold the opposing religious forces together, but their passions were too strong to be contained. The aristocratic leaders stood at the centre of widespread webs of patronage, and when religious conviction was added to clan loyalties, the results could only be mayhem, military confrontation and murder.

On 1 March 1562, the duke of Guise was passing through Wassy-sur-Blaise, some 250 kilometres east of Paris, with his armed escort. He encountered some Huguenots worshipping in a barn. When his men tried to put a stop to this 'heretical' assembly, the Huguenots responded by throwing stones. At this, the duke ordered his men to set fire to the building. More than 100 men, women and children were injured in the mêlée, and 63 perished. The event sparked the first of the French Wars of Religion.

There were major confrontations at Rouen, Dreux and Orléans. During the Siege of Orléans, Guise was shot and killed. Catherine eventually brokered a truce between the two parties, who reluctantly agreed to abide by the royal Edict of Amboise (1563), which allowed the Protestant Huguenots a measure of religious freedom. This had been achieved largely by Louis, Prince of Condé, a member of a cadet branch of the royal family who had become a Huguenot after hearing a Calvinist sermon in Geneva. Behind these rival families lay extensive patronage networks, which meant that serious conflict between them inevitably degenerated into a series of civil



An armed Catholic League procession makes its way through Paris

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

wars. These Wars of Religion and the edicts of pacification that concluded them are as follows:

1562-63	Amboise
1567-68	Longjumeau
1568-70	Saint-Germain
1572-73	La Rochelle
1574-76	Beaulieu
1577	Bergerac
1580	Fleix
1586-98	Vervins/Nantes

During the course of these wars, France was torn apart and some 3 million people perished.

As well as the military engagements, there were clashes at court between the political leaders of the nation. While rival courtiers vied with each other for influence over whichever young king was in power, Catherine attempted to exert control over her sons. To her critics she responded, "There is not an hour of day or night when I am not trying to find some peaceful means of remedying the situation."

Catherine clung to her own Catholic faith, but she refused to give wholehearted backing to the Guise faction. "I have risked a great deal against the Huguenots," she once declared, "but I will not authorise the Catholics to destroy this kingdom. If there are those who do not care about the loss of the state in order that they will be able to say that they have maintained the Catholic religion… I will not be one of them." However, the queen regent couldn't remain aloof from the bloodletting, and her name has always been linked to the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, one of the most atrocious acts of ethnic cleansing in European history.

As the years passed, every attempt at reconciliation was thwarted by the mutual hatred of the parties. A monotonous see-saw of conflict and conciliation had been set in motion. A military victory or a discovered intrigue led to government intervention and the imposition of peace terms, which lasted until the next military engagement or attempted coup.

By 1568, various regions in France had become Huguenot enclaves. The port town of La Rochelle declared itself to be an independent republic on the model of Geneva. Other towns also became Protestant strongholds in which churches were stripped of 'superstitious' images and pseudo-Calvinist policies were established. La Rochelle became the Huguenot capital and its harbour was a refuge for the shipping of Protestant regimes. In 1573, the city endured a five-month Catholic siege. Once more an edict of pacification brought this phase of the wars to an end.

The French struggle was now becoming international. The Huguenots received aid from English and Dutch sources, while the Catholics were supported by Spain and the papacy. In 1574, a German Protestant army led by Johann Casimir of the Protectorate entered the country in support of a new alliance of Huguenots and disaffected Catholics led by the duke of Alençon, younger brother of the new king, Henry III (for rivalries within the royal family now further complicated this conflict). By the terms of the Edict of Beaulieu - otherwise known as the Peace of Monsieur, 'Monsieur' being Alençon's courtesy title - the Huguenots achieved their most generous terms to date. This was as a red flag to a bull to the diehard Catholics.

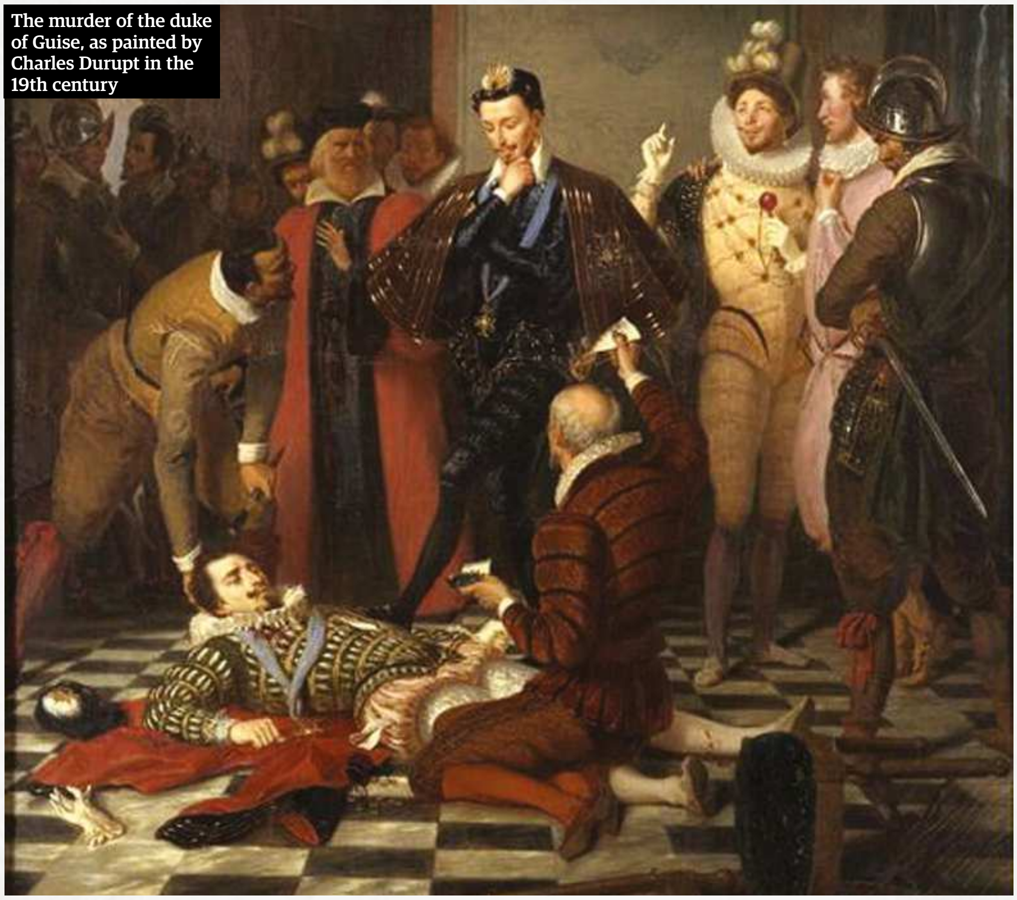
The tables now turned, and it was the Guise faction and their allies who emerged as enemies of the crown. They formed the Catholic League and used every tactic to undermine the king, including accusing him of homosexuality. The League enjoyed the support of a majority in the Estates General, and a lengthy political struggle ensued. At the same time, a fanatical Catholic group appeared called the Sixteen. To them any action, including murder, was justified if it would rid France of all Huguenots.

In 1584, fate once more played a part in this complex politico-religious drama: Alençon died. The next in line to the throne was Henry, king of Navarre, and he was a Huguenot. The Guisards used every stratagem at their command to gain and hold control with the support of the Paris populace and their own military contingents. They forced the king to declare Henry of Navarre's claim invalid, and even forced Henry III to flee the capital.

The king had no option but to meet force with force. In December 1588 he invited the duke of Guise and his brother, Louis, Cardinal of Guise, to the Château de Blois, where they were promptly murdered by the royal guard. In the backlash that followed, Henry III was deposed by the Estates General. Running out of friends, he turned for support to Henry of Navarre, and they prepared to meet the Catholic League in battle.

The exultant Sixteen now instituted a reign of terror in Paris, imprisoning and executing people not devoted to the Catholic cause. That was a mistake. Moderates disowned them. Henry of Navarre laid siege to Paris. Peasant revolts broke out in various places. English and Spanish armies marched through Brittany and Normandy. In many towns political order broke down completely. Plague and famine added to the woes of ordinary people. A Spanish army lifted the Siege of Paris but this did not put an end to the nation's internal political chaos caused by several rival elements competing for power.

Eventually, it was Henry of Navarre who severed the Gordian knot. He accepted Catholicism as the religion of France, famously observing "Paris is worth a mass" while guaranteeing more extensive rights to Huguenots in the Edict of Nantes in April 1598. All the political and religious parties were exhausted and gravely fearful of popular uprisings among the common people who, as ever in such conflicts, had suffered most from the rivalries that divided their social superiors. Finally, France was at peace once again.



The murder of the duke of Guise, as painted by Charles Durupt in the 19th century

IMAGE SOURCE: CHÂTEAU DE BLOIS

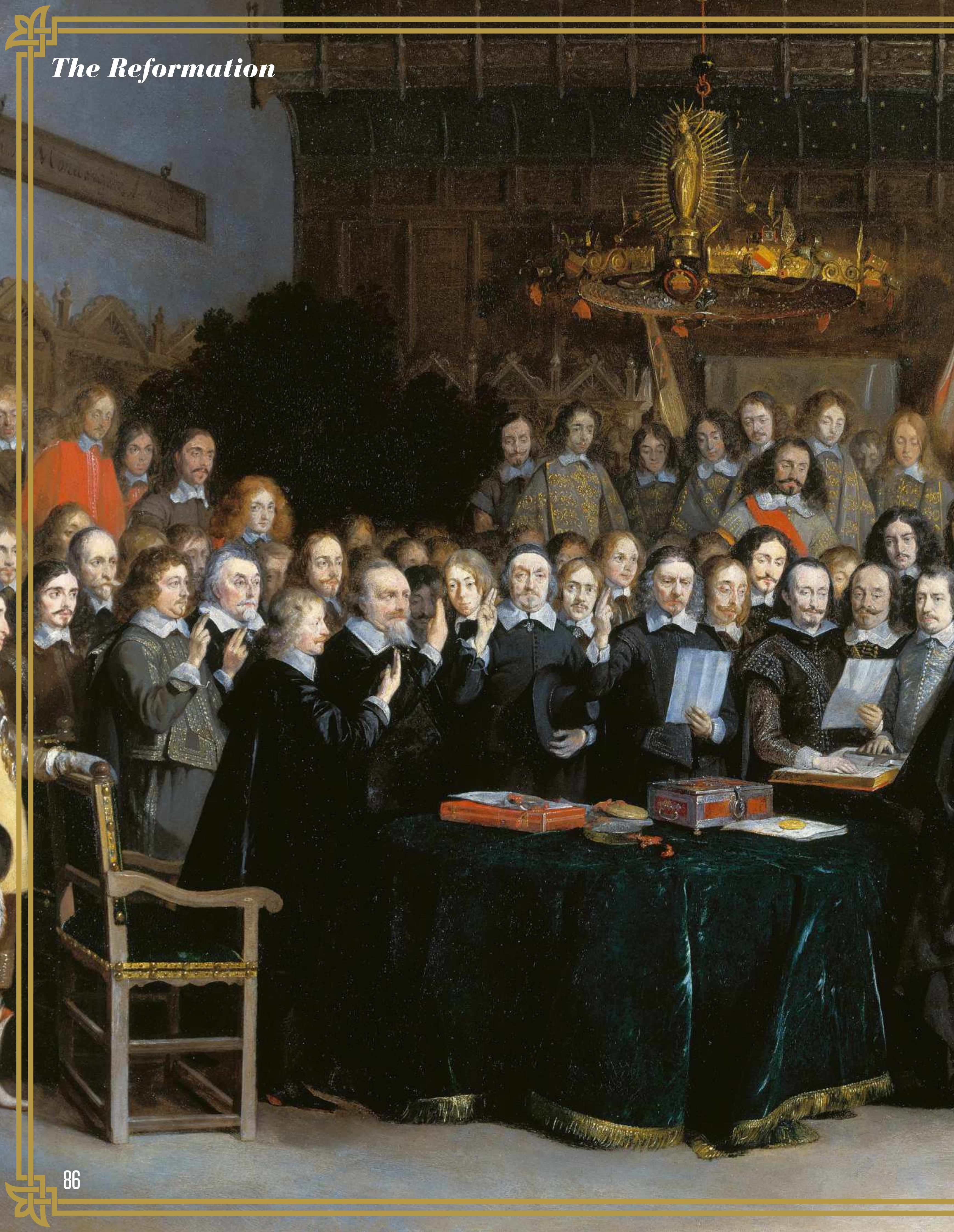


IMAGE SOURCE: CARL VON HÄBERLIN

THE DETERMINED DUTCH

The conflict over independence that raged in the Low Countries between 1568 and 1648 helped to define the future of Europe in the Eighty Years' War

Words by Jon Wright

Philip II of Spain was a famously industrious monarch, working longer hours on matters of state than even his most dedicated ministers. This was to be expected. Philip faced many challenges and could be, by turns, generous, ambitious and mule-headed. The England of Elizabeth I could have testified to the latter quality; Philip's Spain launched armadas, sponsored attempts at regicide and led the propaganda charge against the final Tudor queen.

Philip's animus against an Albion he regarded as particularly perfidious was fuelled by his religious beliefs. His Catholic faith appears to have been deep and genuine and led him to radical action. And if the existence of a Protestant England was a cause of irritation, then it comes as little surprise that the stirrings of what he regarded as heresy within his own domains was utterly intolerable. Here, the 17 provinces of the Spanish Netherlands and a conflict that stretched over the best part of a century - with some much-needed truces along the way - takes centre stage.

The story of the Eighty Years' War (sometimes referred to as the Dutch War of Independence or the Dutch Revolt) was rooted in the religious battles of the 16th and 17th centuries. But it was about a great deal more: the nature of political governance, the petty squabbles of ruling elites, and rivalries between the Netherlands' provinces. In any event, the net result was a horrendous death toll and one of early modern Europe's most ferocious civil wars.

Philip took charge of the Spanish Netherlands in 1555. His father, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, was in the process of dividing up his widespread territorial possessions. It didn't take long for tempers to flare. In northern parts of the Low Countries, a rigorous variety of Calvinism had established itself - along with strong Lutheran and Anabaptist traditions - much to Philip's dismay. On the other side of the equation, Spain's excessive fiscal demands on the region hardly went down well with the locals, and general resentment at Spanish interference was deeply entrenched. The keg was already filled with powder. Philip's enforcement of new ecclesiastical structures in 1559 only deepened tensions.

Many advised Philip that, with so much trouble brewing, he ought to reside in the Low Countries. He opted to return to Castile: not an unreasonable decision given troubles at home and conflicts with the Ottoman Empire on the horizon. Regents were to be appointed in his stead: notably Philip's half-sister, Margaret of Parma, who took the reins in 1559. She faced a difficult situation. Philip's increasingly intolerant attitude towards religious dissent infuriated

> "GENERAL RESENTMENT AT SPANISH INTERFERENCE WAS DEEPLY ENTRENCHED"

STRIPPING THE ALTARS?

The fight between Catholics & Protestants

The Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 was part of a long Reformation tradition of attacking the symbols of Catholicism. Events in the Low Countries were one of the main triggers of conflict between Spain and the Netherlands. Churches and monasteries were attacked across the region, though, with the exception of Maastricht, the violence did not move further south than Antwerp. In that city, in August, every one of Antwerp's churches was plundered.

The levels of extremity and the reaction of the authorities often depended on the numerical balance between Catholic and Protestant populations. In some places, the local militia simply stood by and watched. Altars were stripped, artworks vandalised, and vestments and statues destroyed. Entire monastic libraries were sometimes put to the flame. Catholics were sometimes minded to retaliate by attacking Protestant religious meetings and even forcing Protestant children to be baptised. Fortunately, it was a short-lived affair and order was restored. Margaret of Parma, the regent, adopted a relatively benign attitude towards the perpetrators, but Philip II had other ideas. Before too long, the duke of Alva arrived and a reign of terror began.

many leading Dutch notables, chief among them William of Orange, known as 'the Silent', though, as his career would later demonstrate, he was far from taciturn.

William had been a loyal Habsburg supporter and had even been appointed as Statholder of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht by Philip. But by the mid 1560s, anti-heretical measures appeared to be reaching their zenith and William was not best pleased. In his famous *Letters from the Segovia Woods* (lovely sounding but full of venom), Philip insisted that Protestantism was not to be allowed to flourish in the Low Countries. Petitions were submitted to Margaret by the so-called League of Compromise, made up of several hundred nobles, demanding the removal of the Inquisition. That body, they insisted, would quash their "freedom to express their opinions [and] do away with all the ancient privileges, franchises and immunities".

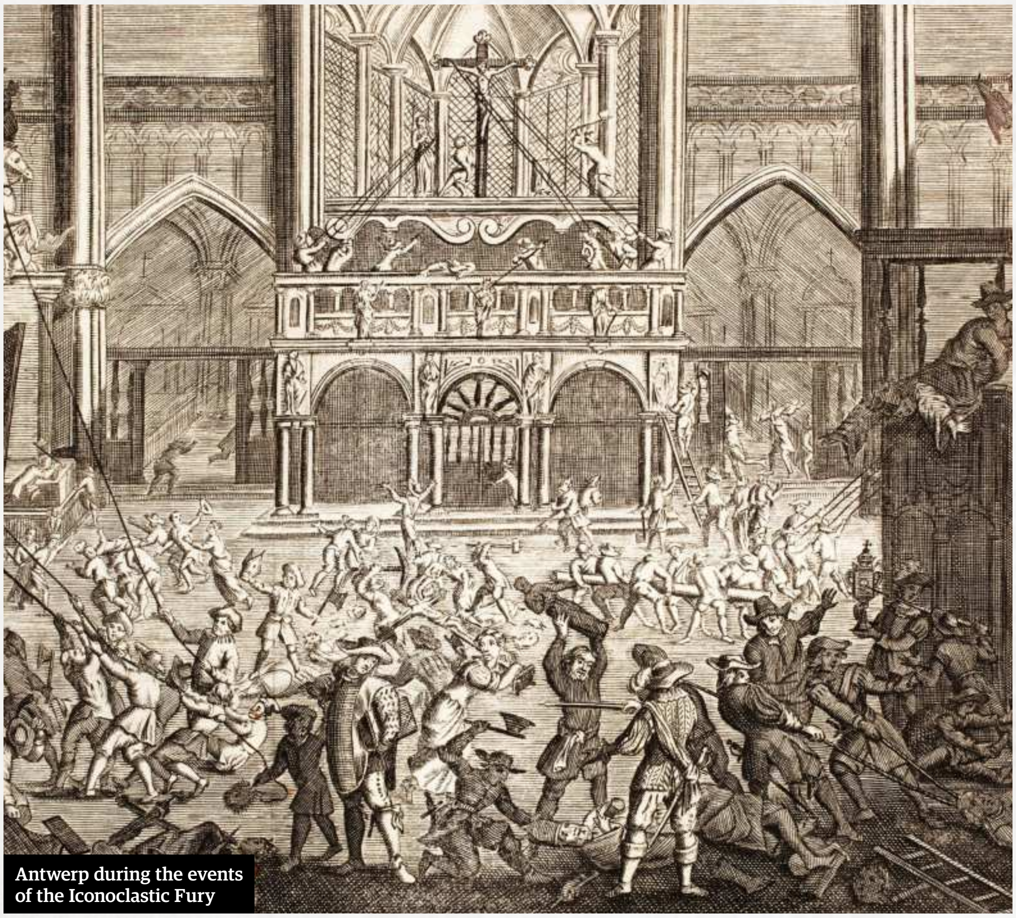
Margaret accepted their demands and, for a short spell, open Protestant preaching flourished. This success also inspired more radical action, however. In 1566, some Protestants embarked upon the so-called Iconoclastic Fury: a wholesale assault on art, sculpture and anything else they regarded as offensive in Catholic churches. Margaret tried to inform Philip that order had quickly been restored (as indeed it had), but Philip took a firmer line. He despatched the duke of Alva to the Low Countries, Margaret resigned in protest, and the era of the infamous Council of Troubles began. At least 1,000 rebels were killed through the activities of this tribunal and William of Orange went into exile. The 60-year-old Alva had arrived in the Netherlands in 1567 with 10,000 troops. He had struck at his rivals - notably the dukes of Egmond and Horn, who were beheaded in a Brussels marketplace - and had most certainly made a bad situation even worse. The battle lines had been drawn, and before too long open military combat would be underway.

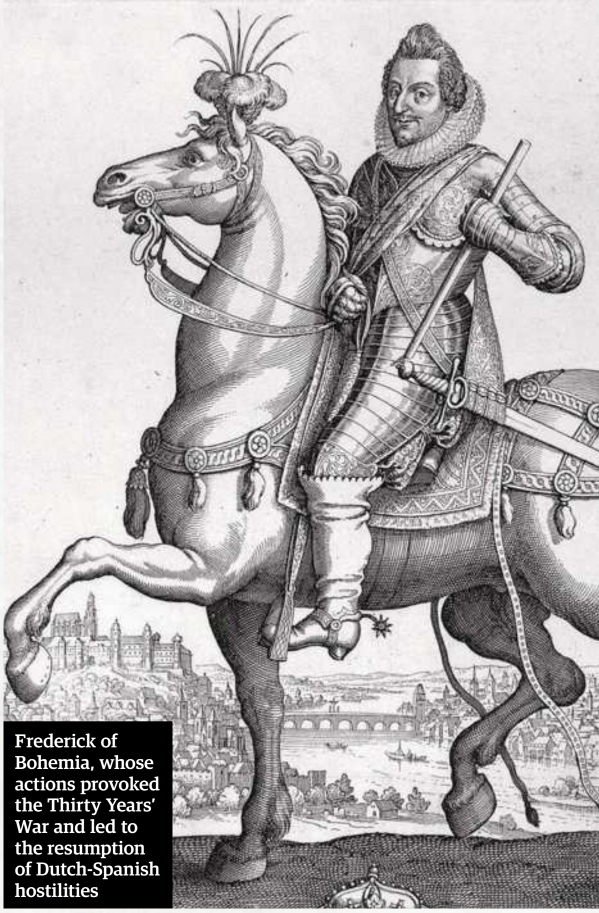
A ROCKY START

In May 1568, Louis of Nassau, William's brother, won a significant victory against the Spanish at Heiligerlee. Within a few months, however, the Spanish crushed their enemies at the Battle of Jemminghen. Louis of Nassau's initial triumph would prove to be the rebels' last successful battle for four years as William of Orange's invasion attempts all fell flat. However, the Sea-Beggars Fleet fared rather better.

This assemblage of rebel ships sailed out of Emden and, occasionally, English Channel ports, and plundered, raided and disrupted trade with abandon. In 1572 the Sea Beggars captured Brill, followed by Flushing and Veere. Cheered by these events, and already furious at Alva's recent taxation policies, dozens of cities were persuaded to pledge their loyalty to Orange, and by the end of 1572 all of North Holland - with the exception of Amsterdam - was in rebel hands.

Over the coming years, a military to-and-fro unfolded. The Dutch made inroads, the Spanish


Antwerp during the events of the Iconoclastic Fury


Frederick of Bohemia, whose actions provoked the Thirty Years' War and led to the resumption of Dutch-Spanish hostilities

pushed them back. There were too many battles and sieges to name, plus moments of real tragedy: at the massacre at Naarden in 1572, the Spanish killed almost the entire population – a few survivors escaped through the snow.

The general pattern of loyalty to Spain in the Southern Netherlands and commitment to revolt in the North was maintained, but matters were clearly becoming chaotic. This was hammered home when unpaid Spanish troops mutinied and embarked on rampages, a period of chaos epitomised by the horrific events at Antwerp in November 1576 – a riot of pillage, looting and rape. The south now saw sense in making some degree of compromise with the north, and this led to the Pacification of Ghent and a demand that Spanish troops be withdrawn.

This was agreed to, but it didn't take long for the always-determined Philip to raise new armies and send them north under the duke of Parma. Parma quickly made headway, and it was clear to the leaders of the revolt that political organisation had to be placed on a more formal footing.

In 1579, the Union of Utrecht was established between Holland and its neighbouring provinces: it makes sense to regard this as, in some ways, the founding moment of the Dutch Republic – although the official naming of the Republic would have to wait for a couple of years. In the south, loyalty to Spain was rekindled, which produced the Treaty of Arras in the same year as the Utrecht union.

Parma's armies (60,000 strong) went from strength to strength and, militarily, these were terrible years for the Dutch. Coastal cities and large swathes of territory were lost. The other provinces also began to resent Holland's dominance. With the Republic on the back foot, some rather odd strategies were launched. Perhaps a morale-boosting figurehead might be a timely idea? The job was offered to François, Duke of Anjou, the brother of the king of France, in 1580, but he proved to be wildly incompetent.

The assassination of William of Orange in 1584 was another major blow, but it was hoped that another innovative political manoeuvre could save the day. Rulership of the Netherlands was duly offered to Elizabeth I. She declined but in 1585 accepted the Republic as a protectorate and despatched Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, as her governor general. Leicester took 6,000 troops with him but he was rather resented by some Dutch leaders and did not perform well militarily. By 1587, the English forces were heading home across the North Sea.

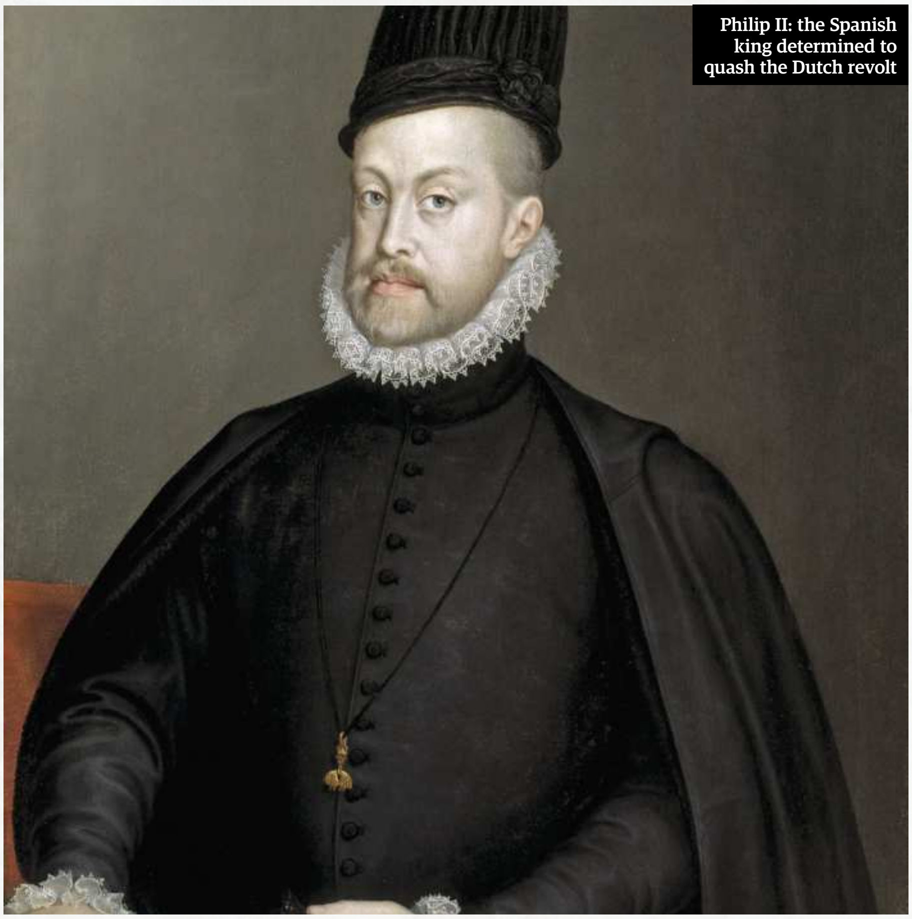
It wasn't all doom and gloom, however. The Republic was developing a firmer sense of solidarity and even set-backs could be turned to the rebels' advantage. No one welcomed the loss of Antwerp in 1585, but this led to a mass northward exodus of skilled businessmen, artisans and merchants. As a result, Amsterdam's economic life blossomed. Better yet, by the late 1580s there were signs the Republic might yet turn the tide.

MIGHTY MAURICE AND HOPES FOR A TRUCE

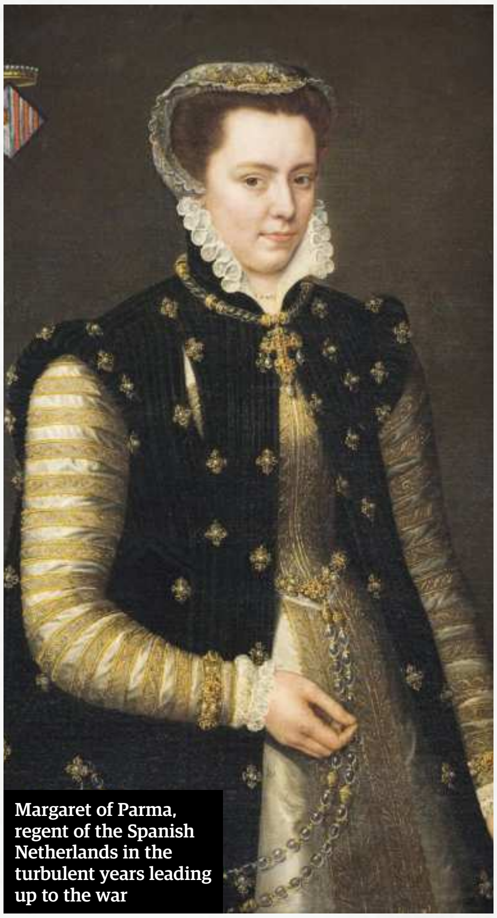
Spain didn't enjoy a particularly successful final two decades of the 16th century; its finances were in disarray and it was mightily distracted by involvement in France's internal wars. The Dutch took full advantage. Major territorial inroads were made, and there were even attempts to extend the Republic's influence into the German territory of East Friesland. Much of the credit goes to Maurice of Nassau, a brilliant and innovative military leader with a special gift for siege warfare: in a single year during the 1590s he managed to capture eight towns.

The death of the zealous Philip II in 1598 was another positive development for the Dutch. His successor, Philip III, and his deputies in the Netherlands, Philip's daughter Isabella and her husband Archduke Albert, appeared to be much more amenable to reaching some kind of compromise or truce with the Dutch. Various stumbling blocks – notably any notion of freedom of religion for Catholics in the Republic – stood in the way, however, and before too long hostilities recommenced. This time around, fortune favoured the Spanish.

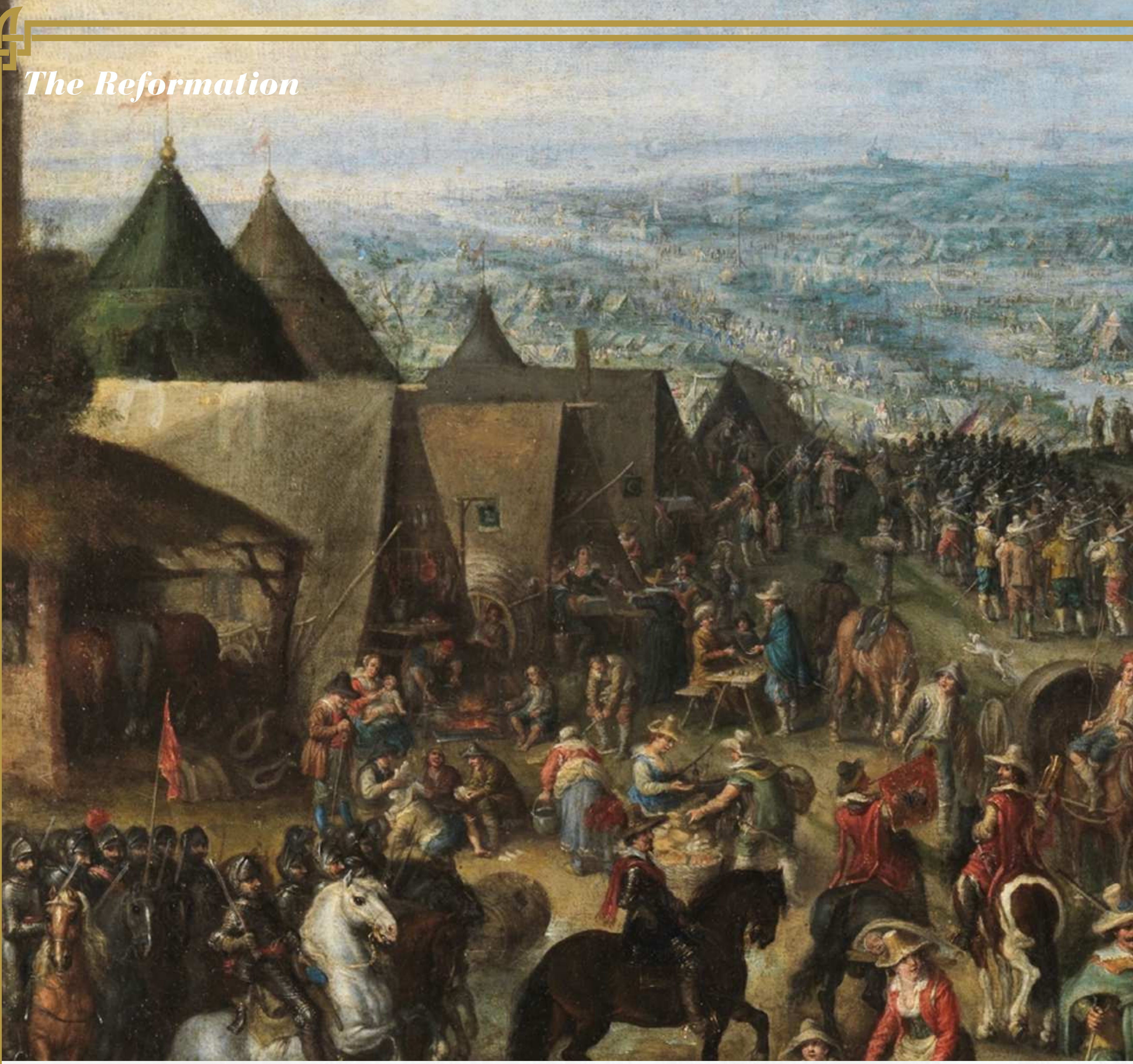
Maurice of Nassau became overly ambitious, launching rather pointless expeditions into Flanders, and the military stalemate that defined the first few years of the 1600s gave way to a string of hard-won Spanish victories. Perhaps most memorable of all was the Siege of Ostend,



Philip II: the Spanish king determined to quash the Dutch revolt



Margaret of Parma, regent of the Spanish Netherlands in the turbulent years leading up to the war



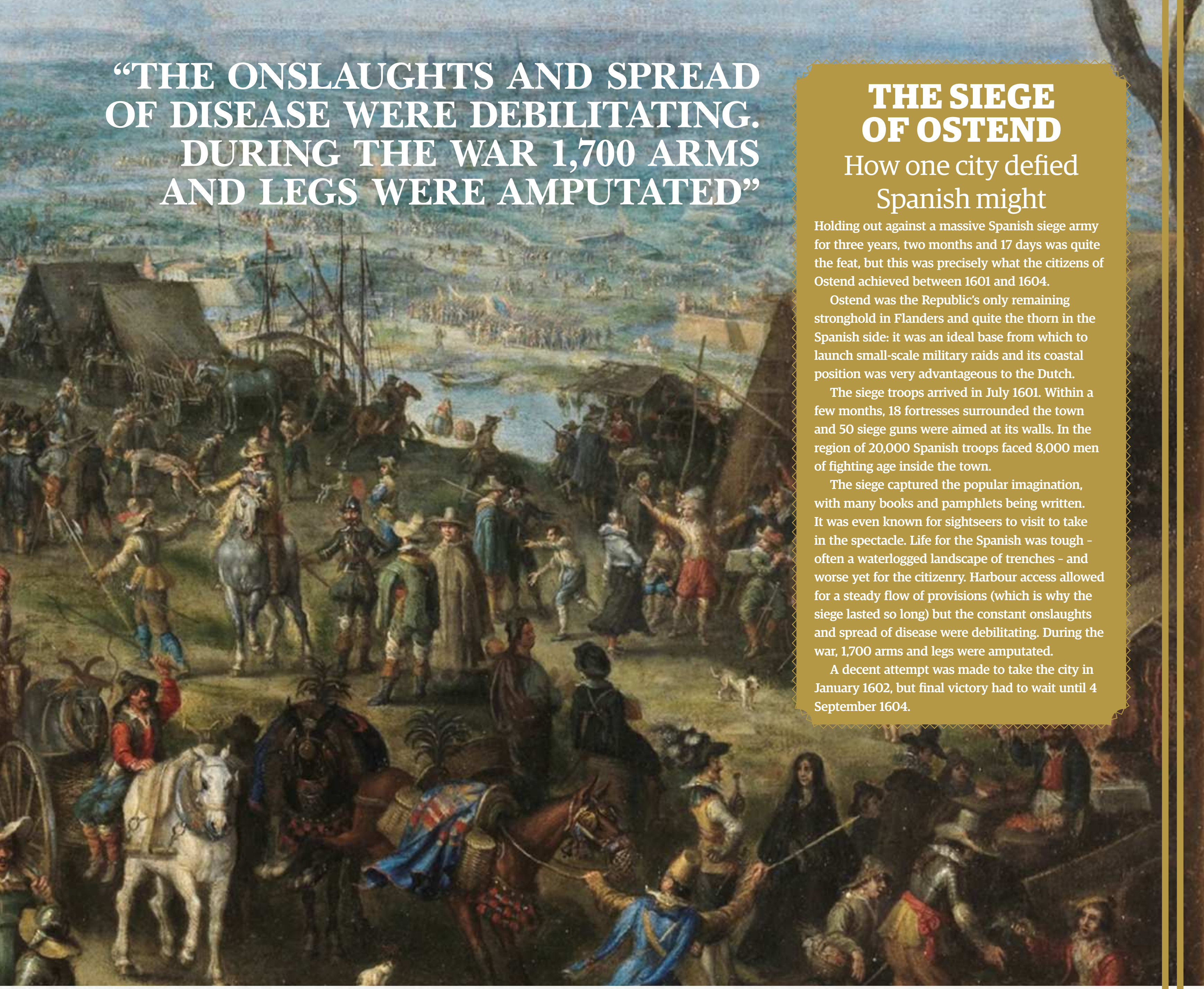
which, in lasting for over three years between 1601 and 1604, was one of the longest sieges in European history. For all that, the Dutch had made impressive improvements in their military strategising and their armies were now more or less evenly matched numerically with those of the enemy. Perhaps it was time to call it a day - or at least enjoy a respite.

Both sides recognised that such a prolonged conflict - one that had never really produced any lasting results or any clear victor - was not worth the vast financial expense. And so, in 1609, a 12-year truce was signed. It was a major achievement for the Dutch: it signalled formal recognition of the Republic and had the added, very lucrative side-effect of allowing the Dutch to trade in Spanish waters.

For a while the Dutch turned their minds to internal squabbles - chiefly over theological matters - but within a few years conflict was once more brewing. The Republic's political elite was routinely divided into factions of hawks and doves. The former were eager to position the Republic as a leading Protestant nation, willing and able to play a role in Protestant military conflicts across the continent.

An ideal opportunity arose when Bohemia determined to seek independence from its Catholic Habsburg overlords. When Frederick V, Elector Palatine (a man admired by Maurice of Nassau), was invited to become king, Catholic Europe was appalled at the Bohemian rebels' audacity and, by 1618, the Thirty Years' War was underway. It was not hard to guess which side would be taken by the Dutch - indeed, their meddling had helped to provoke the conflict - and since Spain's position in the war was equally predictable the chances of renewing, the 12-year-truce began to fade.

Sure enough, the Eighty Years' War, now an aspect of the broader European conflict, entered its final phase. It was, though, a rather different kind of war in many ways. It seemed highly unlikely that either side would ever be able to secure total victory by taking charge of the entire Netherlands. Borders between north and south were now crammed with mighty forts to repel any enemies. Some major military engagements occurred, but for the most part this was now a trade war - the stuff of embargoes, blockades and no little privateering. The Spanish now spent a



“THE ONSLAUGHTS AND SPREAD OF DISEASE WERE DEBILITATING. DURING THE WAR 1,700 ARMS AND LEGS WERE AMPUTATED”

THE SIEGE OF OSTEND

How one city defied Spanish might

Holding out against a massive Spanish siege army for three years, two months and 17 days was quite the feat, but this was precisely what the citizens of Ostend achieved between 1601 and 1604.

Ostend was the Republic's only remaining stronghold in Flanders and quite the thorn in the Spanish side: it was an ideal base from which to launch small-scale military raids and its coastal position was very advantageous to the Dutch.

The siege troops arrived in July 1601. Within a few months, 18 fortresses surrounded the town and 50 siege guns were aimed at its walls. In the region of 20,000 Spanish troops faced 8,000 men of fighting age inside the town.

The siege captured the popular imagination, with many books and pamphlets being written. It was even known for sightseers to visit to take in the spectacle. Life for the Spanish was tough - often a waterlogged landscape of trenches - and worse yet for the citizenry. Harbour access allowed for a steady flow of provisions (which is why the siege lasted so long) but the constant onslaughts and spread of disease were debilitating. During the war, 1,700 arms and legs were amputated.

A decent attempt was made to take the city in January 1602, but final victory had to wait until 4 September 1604.

great deal of time disrupting the Dutch herring trade or molesting Dutch shipping on the way through the Straits of Gibraltar.

Maurice of Nassau died in 1625, to the relief of many, his autocratic tendencies having become increasingly pronounced. His successor and half-brother, Frederick Henry, proved to be an able ruler. Dutch armies performed well in Germany, capturing major fortresses, and there were also opportunities to inflict a bloody nose on the Spanish from time to time. A highlight was the seizure of a massive treasure fleet in the Caribbean in 1628: this came at a time when Spanish finances were at a particularly low ebb.

As direct military conflict started up again in the Low Countries during the 1630s, Frederick Henry also oversaw a number of imaginative strategies. In 1632 he declared that freedom of worship would be granted to Catholics in any territories captured by the Dutch. They were “implored to cast off the yoke of the Spaniards”. It was a crowd-pleasing move, even if it infuriated some northern Calvinists. Next, the Dutch looked to France as an ally, and in a 1635 treaty plans were hatched to capture and carve up the Southern Netherlands. This was easier said than done, though some victories were secured - notably the capture of the crucial Spanish castle at Schenkenschans in 1635. Progress was also made on the overseas front in Asia, Africa and South America (against both the Spanish and Portuguese), though many of these incursions did not last beyond the end of the war.

Attempts had been made to engineer a peace throughout this period, and by the 1640s it was abundantly clear that enough was enough. As part of the negotiations that brought the Thirty Years' War to a close, separate talks were held between the Spanish and Dutch at Münster. The Republic came out of them well. It was now an internationally recognised state with a remarkable cultural future ahead of it.

The end of the war also reflected a shift in attitudes towards religious conflicts. These would, of course, continue for decades to come, but the rhetorical themes displayed by one 1620s Spaniard were beginning to appear outdated. Flanders, he had said, had to be defended from the Protestant Republic because it was “the only rampart against the infidel and the heretic, and should it fall Christianity becomes prey”. Such rhetoric endured, but political pragmatism was on the rise.

BLOOD & COIN

The life and death of a Landsknecht mercenary in the most devastating conflict of the 17th century

Words by Peter Wolfgang Price

The Thirty Years' War is often remembered as one of Europe's longest and bloodiest conflicts, with its destructive origins rooted in the religious friction between Catholic and Protestant factions within the Holy Roman Empire. The Treaty of Augsburg in 1555 settled many of the existing disagreements between the two opponents, but did little to resolve the fundamental issues of imperial authority and the rights of individual states. When Ferdinand II, a zealous Catholic Habsburg, became king of Bohemia and Hungary, and then was eventually elected emperor, Catholicism began to be strictly imposed throughout the empire. By 1618, many Protestant states, angry at the imposition, openly revolted and war had begun.

For 30 years, terror and destruction plagued Europea, especially in the German states, where the lion's share of the fighting occurred. This wanton slaughter saw about 8 million Europeans lose their lives, with some German kingdoms losing up to 50 per cent of their populations. As well as the exceptional loss of life, the conflict is known for the large number of mercenary troops employed by both the Protestant and Catholic Leagues. Although by this point their golden years were waning, the German Landsknecht were still a fearsome fighting force to be reckoned with across Europe.

Created to combat and impersonate Swiss mercenaries who started to dominate 15th- and 16th-century battlefields, the Landsknecht carved out their own fearsome reputation from international service in the armies of monarchs, such as those of Charles V and Henry VIII.

The main weapon of the Landsknecht, like many mercenary companies at the time, was the pike. Usually about six metres long, when used en masse it presented a hedge of razor-sharp metal that would decimate infantry and cavalry alike. The minimal training required to make the weapon deadly in a recruit's hands was preferred over the use of other weapons such as bastard swords, halberds and arquebuses. The latter was used with pike formations in increasing numbers during the later 16th and 17th centuries, in what would become known as 'pike and shot'. Being flexible in this formation, which saw unit size reduced and formation changes all through the 16th century, allowed Landsknecht groups to

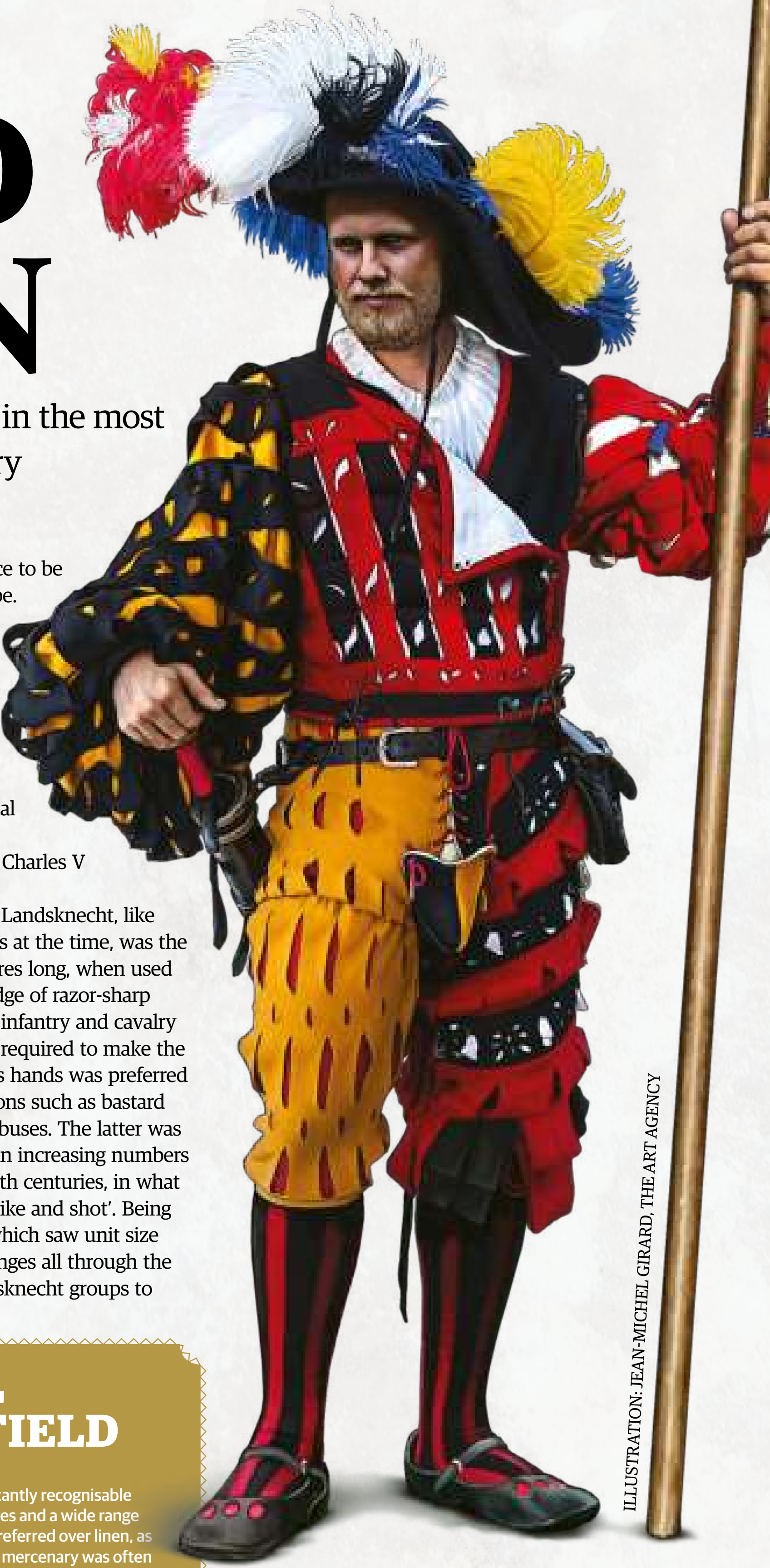


ILLUSTRATION: JEAN-MICHEL GIRARD, THE ART AGENCY

BRINGING SARTORIAL SWAGGER TO THE BATTLEFIELD

The Landsknecht showed that fashion could indeed be deadly. They were rightly famous and instantly recognisable from their bright and flamboyant clothing. Tights, slashed doublets, plumed hats, billowing sleeves and a wide range of codpieces identified an archetypal mercenary in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Wool was preferred over linen, as slashes in linen tended to unravel. The reason for this peculiar fashion sense was that the life of a mercenary was often short and brutal, and so Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I encouraged them to dress to impress. Armour, usually a breastplate, could be worn over the slashed doublet for added protection.

operate effectively during the Thirty Years' War and beyond.

In the 1990s, German researchers uncovered a partially complete diary written by a Landsknecht mercenary during the war. Although it wasn't actually signed by the author, researchers have found that the book belonged to a man named Peter Hagendorf. His account paints a vivid picture of a soldier's life in a 17th-century army, with hunger, poverty and death common travelling companions. Spanning the years 1624-48, one of the diary's most astonishing aspects is the extraordinary distance Hagendorf travelled in 24 years - almost 15,000 miles, mostly on foot. His journey would take him across Germany, over the Alps to Italy, to the Baltic coast, then on to France, Pomerania and finally Germany again.

The diary shows the fluidity of a mercenary's allegiances, with Hagendorf changing sides three times during the conflict. While he served under Gottfried Pappenheim for most of the war, he began in the service of the Venetians. Here, he initially fought against Pappenheim, but after the regiment disbanded and Hagendorf was left in poverty, the Landsknecht found himself on Pappenheim's payroll from 1627. He would serve for six years before his company was caught in the Swedish siege of Straubing, and slaughtered almost to a man. Instead of surrendering, Hagendorf - now a sergeant - was recruited into the ranks of the Red Regiment. This sudden change does not appear to alarm Hagendorf, who goes on to tell how he sold one of his horses to pay for a three-day drinking bender with his cousin. However, this faction change also did not last long, as in 1634 after a sound defeat he was back on the Imperialist side.

The Thirty Years' War, almost more than any other conflict, was fought with a background firmly fixed in religious intolerances. Peter Hagendorf strangely never mentions his or his regiment's affiliations, although as a mercenary group this might not have been necessary. As the years progress, Hagendorf becomes increasingly brutal and offhand to the violence and suffering happening around, and caused by, him.

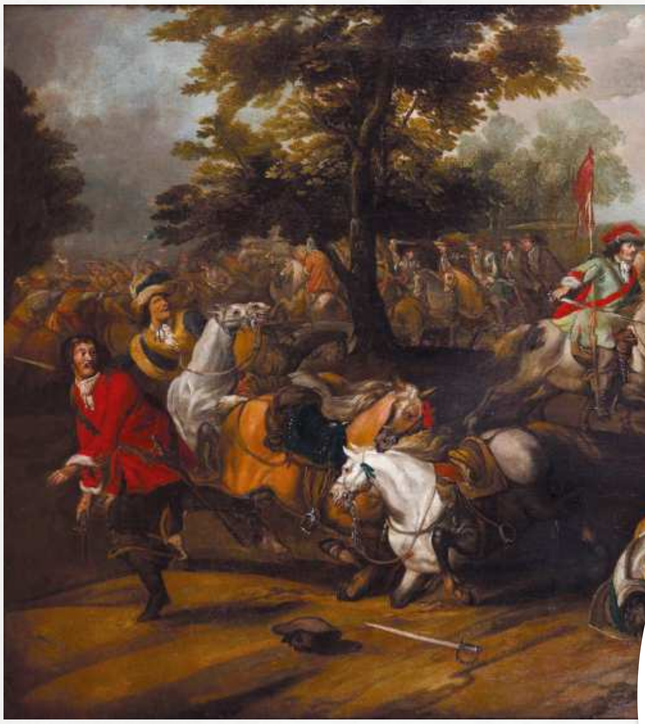
Despite war being a mercenary's profession, Hagendorf's diaries give scant information on the battles he was involved in. His company only saw two major set pieces in the war, with one particularly brutal attack occurring on the city of Magdeburg on 20 May 1631. Contemporary accounts focus on the horror and wanton slaughter that occurred there, when thousands of angry, hungry and unpaid soldiers broke into the city. The carnage was so great and terrifying that 'magdeburgization' became a byword for total destruction for many years to come. One resident of the city and an eyewitness writes that the "shouting, crying and howling could be heard from far away".

In contrast, Hagendorf's entry, from the soldier's perspective, leaves out the bloodshed and misery. He does express sorrow for the fall of Magdeburg, as it was, in his eyes, a beautiful city and was located within his 'fatherland', Germany. According to Tryntje Helfferich's translation of Hagendorf's diary in *The Thirty Years' War: A Documentary History*, he describes his part in the sacking: "I came into town with storming hand, without scathe. But in the town at the Newtown Gate, I was shot two times in the body, as this was my loot."

Unable to participate in the looting frenzy, Hagendorf was led back to the camp where he was given medical attention: "For one I was shot in the stomach, and for the other through both axels that the bullet laid in the shirt. So the feldscher (army surgeon) bound my hands on the back so that he could insert the chisel (forceps)."

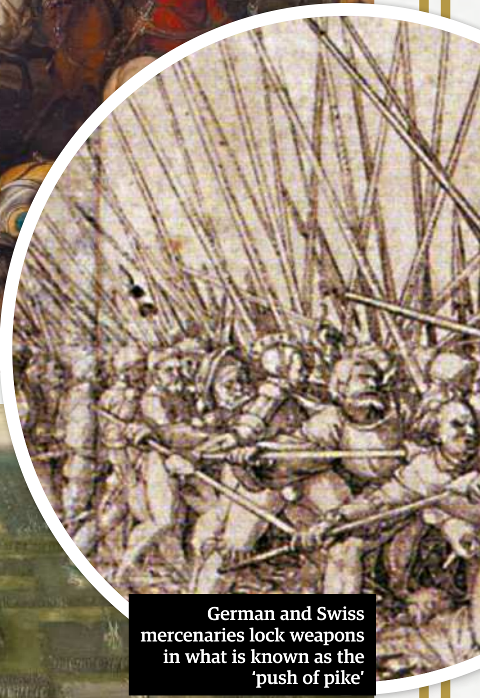
Being taken out of action, while obviously endangering his life, meant that the mercenary could not take part in the sacking of the city and he therefore did not receive his pay. Luckily, Hangendorf's wife was on hand to enter the city and grab some loot for him. After fearing for her safety as buildings started being demolished, she brought back "a large tankard... two silver belts and clothes".

Hagendorf was also present at the Battle of Breitenfeld, which occurred just a few months after the siege. His account of the skirmish, a

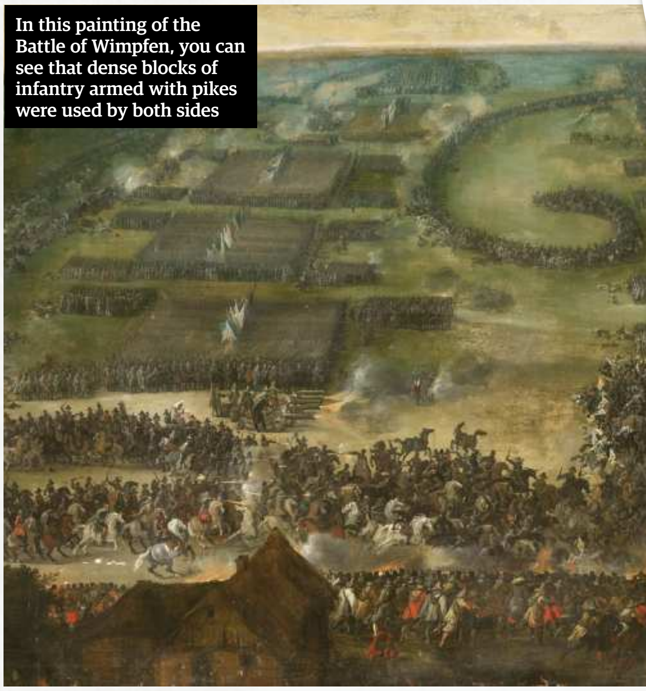


Pieter Snayers' painting of the Battle of Breitenfeld, where Hagendorf and the Imperials were defeated by Gustavus Adolphus

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY



German and Swiss mercenaries lock weapons in what is known as the 'push of pike'



In this painting of the Battle of Wimpfen, you can see that dense blocks of infantry armed with pikes were used by both sides

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

crushing victory by the brilliant general Gustavus Adolphus, is rather muted as to the importance of the clash. If he was aware of the wider tactical and political changes, he does not make any note of them. The battle did convince many Protestant German states to back Sweden, but as Hagendorf is neutral, the significance seems to pass him by.

Money was on the forefront of a mercenary's mind, even in times of personal danger. During the Thirty Years' War, wages, like rations, were mostly late or non-existent, which in turn led to plunder and looting being the most effective way to get paid. Hagendorf frequently documents his monetary triumphs and woes, giving us an insight into the constant struggle to make a living during the chaos. He had several schemes over the years to supplement his mercenary income. In 1625, he would work a trade with a lute maker after his guard shift, earning himself a reasonable profit. This money disappeared by the next year, however, with Hagendorf finding himself begging on the streets of Milan.

With no other income, Hagendorf joined Pappenheim's regiment, as he was "completely down and out". Tumultuous years would follow; he would be secure one moment and then, like in 1634, he would lose everything. His servant was robbed of all the possessions he had sent away for safekeeping. Other enterprises went well, as in 1640 and 1646, he helped alleviate ration shortages by baking bread in a homemade oven - for a nominal fee, of course.

An army marches on its stomach and this was especially true during the Thirty Years' War. Long years of conflict had all but destroyed many crop yields across Germany, and daily rations would almost always come up short. A typical daily ration would consist of 730 grams of bread, baked with wheat and rye flour, usually prepared communally then shared out.

Corruption was rife in the companies themselves, with the bulking out of provisions just one of a growing list of problems. Some captains sought to increase their profits by recording 'dummy' recruits on their rosters. These men, while not existing but on paper, were given equipment and wages by their employer, with the most senior officers all taking a cut. While this lined the pockets of some, it did lower the combat effectiveness of the company.

The greed trickled down the command structure, with quartermasters and officers also on the lookout to supplement their wages. They would often cut the flour with inferior grain to drive up their profit margins. With differences in regional weights thrown in, the unfortunate soldier on the ground would often find his bread lacking. The story was the same with meat rations, with maggot-ridden or rotten meat used to gouge some extra coin out of the situation. It is no wonder, with the ration situation so unpredictable, that men would turn to robbery to fill their empty bellies. Hagendorf stole and burned vast swathes of French crops near Colmar.

One of history's most destructive conflicts, the Thirty Years' War raged from 1618 to 1648

Indeed, in the diaries, much time is given to the food and drink he enjoyed on campaign. Feasts or a lack of food seem to take precedence over military engagements and most other aspects of life. Almost every year he feels the need to record when he received "good quarters", which could mean when an inn would serve chicken, duck or veal instead of tired old beef, the main meat ration. Hagendorf also expressed a great love for beer, wine and any other alcohol he could get his hands on. However, drinking would only give a short respite to his problems and usually made an already tough life unbearable. In 1625, after he was disbanded from a Venetian mercenary company. Arriving at the town of Schaffhausen, he begged enough money for some warm shoes, a necessity considering he had just crossed the Alps. Instead, he found an inn where "the wine was so good that I forgot about the shoes".

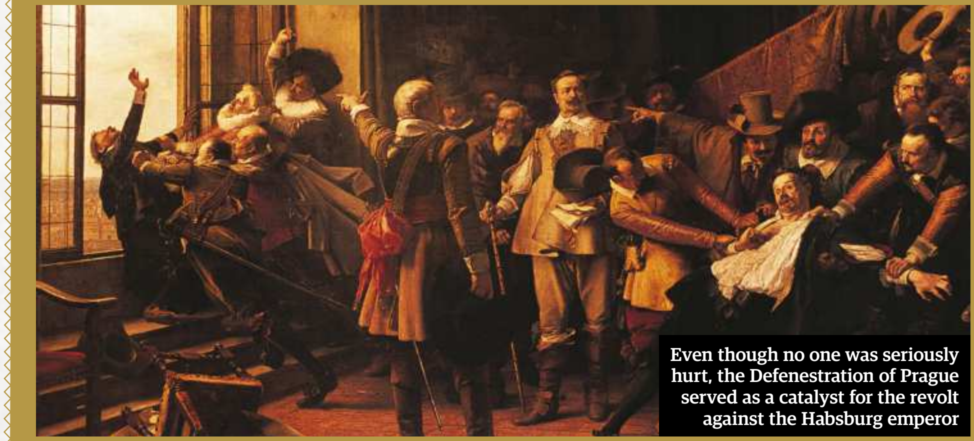
In the 24 years Hagendorf was campaigning, his constant movement would make it impossible to settle down with his family, who chose instead to follow him on his travels. Raising children in that environment, when even adults are susceptible to hunger, cold and illness, would have been a supreme challenge. Tragically, he suffered through the deaths of seven of his children and his first wife. These children, marked with a simple cross in the diary, usually don't even live a few months before becoming ill.

The heavy use of mercenaries in the Thirty Years' War was not a popular one with local populations. Using underpaid men who made their wages by looting could mean that an army stayed in the field for years. One 16th-century writer described them as, "Blaspheming, whoring, gambling, murdering, burning, robbing and widow-making... it is their common handiwork and greatest amusement."

This ad hoc system may go some way to explain some of the brutal methods used by Landsknecht and other mercenaries. Hunger, disease, poverty and death on the battlefield would have hung over the heads of many, perhaps driving them to questionable actions for the simple need of survival.

THE HORRORS OF WAR

With marauding armies menacing the population of Europe, both sides were guilty of atrocities



Even though no one was seriously hurt, the Defenestration of Prague served as a catalyst for the revolt against the Habsburg emperor

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

The Thirty Years' War had horrendous casualty rates, as it was not just military units that were affected. The civilian population of Europe, especially Germany, suffered untold atrocities at the hands of marauding mercenary forces. Men from both sides were responsible for such acts as theft, extortion and even murder. These demands could also be levied as taxes, with armies demanding food and coin while moving through a province. Extortion would consist of threats to person or property in exchange for payment. According to Tryntje Helfferich's translation in *The Thirty Years' War: A Documentary History*, Peter Hagendorf writes about such an incident while in the service of Pappenheim: "Wherever we camped overnight, the head of the household would give us... half a thaler. It was for the best, since then we...let him keep his livestock in peace."

These acts, and many like them, were a regular occurrence in the war, which is not surprising as equally distressing acts were committed when the war was beginning. The Defenestration of Prague, as it is known, occurred in 1618 and was one of the direct causes of the conflict. Catholic regents had travelled to Bohemia in an attempt to calm rebellious Protestants. The discussion grew heated and coaxed the inflammatory words, "See, all dear lords, these men are great enemies of us and our religion." With this statement, the regents were thrown from a window, luckily surviving the fall by apparently landing in manure.

FORM RANKS

Discipline and a rigid command structure were essential to control these headstrong warriors

The organisation of a Landsknecht company revolved around a complex command and disciplinary structure. The highest-ranking officer, usually a colonel, would have direct control over the rest of his command group, which would have numbered about 22 men. In addition to ranks like captain, lieutenant, sergeant and corporal, there was also an ensign rank. It was their duty to bear the company colours, which served a dual purpose: one was to embody the company spirit, and the other, more practical, role was to act as a rallying point and landmark on the battlefield – where smoke and the clamour of battle could obscure views, the colours would act as a marker.

Other less-military ranks, were just as important in the running of a company. A selection of clerks, surgeons, cooks, priests, servants and musicians were essential additions that kept the company whole. Some of these positions were looked upon with disdain and disgust by their fellow mercenaries, but were deemed a necessary evil. The position of provost was such a role, with the man attempting to curb the excessive drinking, gambling and violence that was commonplace in a company. He would also be charged with keeping the multitude of camp followers – from provision merchants to cooks, prostitutes and craftsmen – in line. If anyone should loot, burn or attack without the consent of the commanding officer, they could be in line to meet the executioner. These individuals, identifiable by their blood-red garb, were the most loathed people in the camp.

> “IF ANYONE SHOULD LOOT, BURN OR ATTACK WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, THEY COULD BE IN LINE TO MEET THE EXECUTIONER”

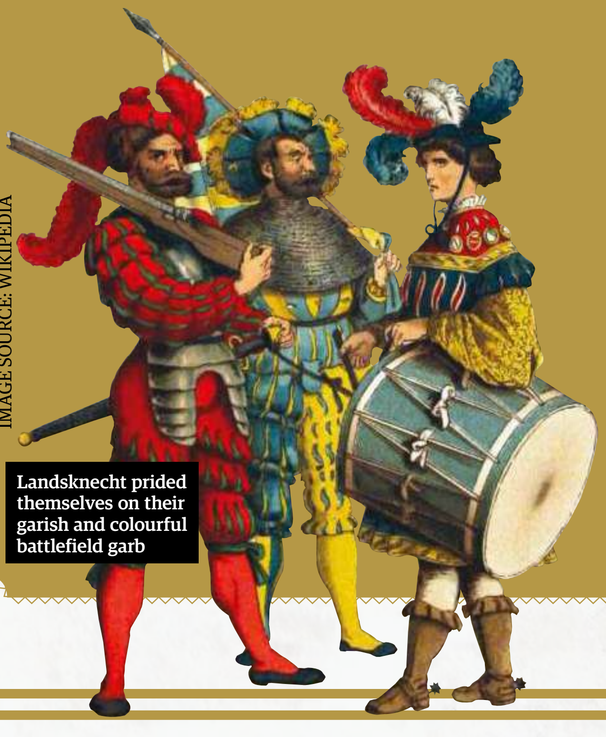

Landsknecht prided themselves on their garish and colourful battlefield garb

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

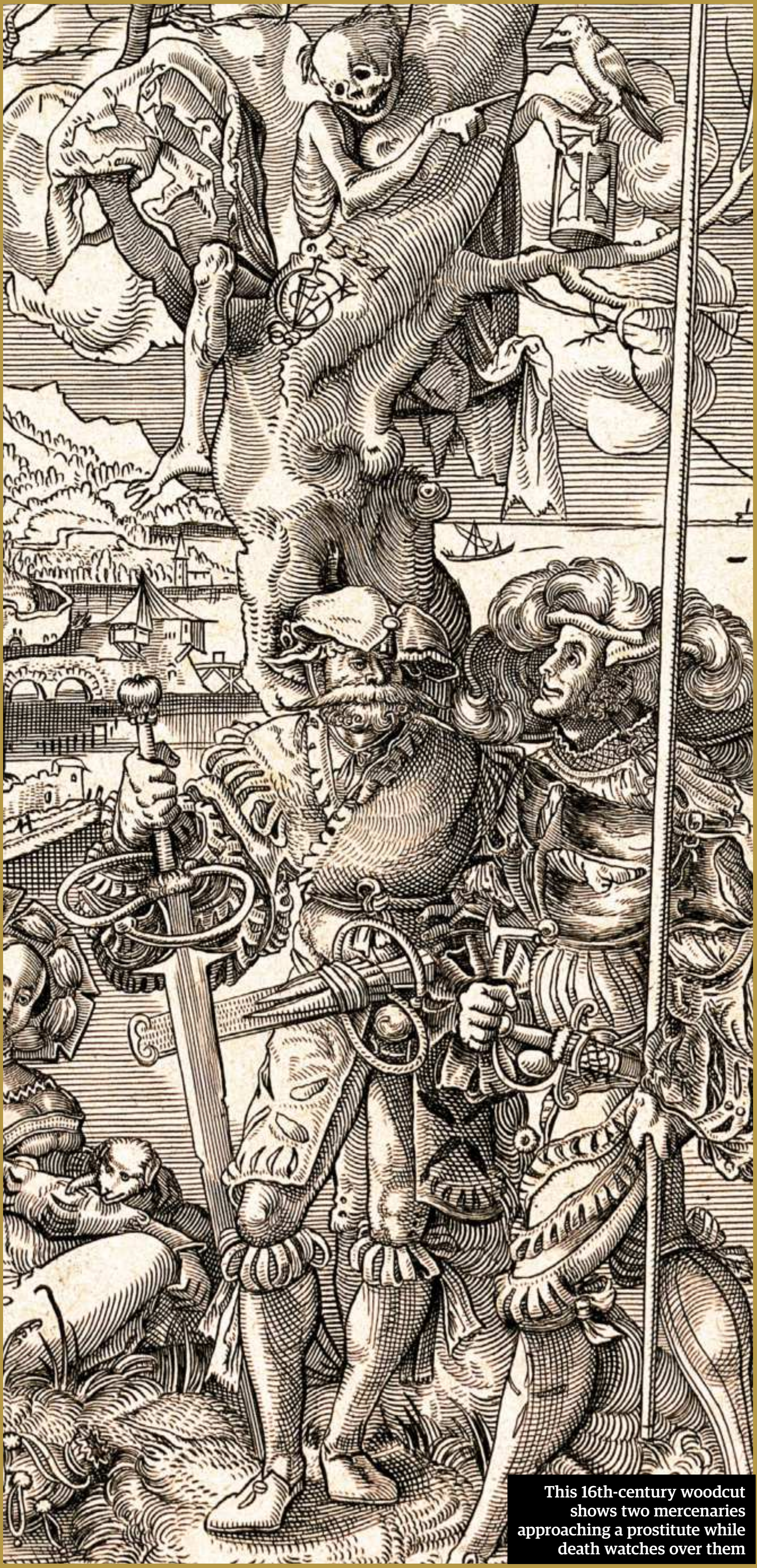

This 16th-century woodcut shows two mercenaries approaching a prostitute while death watches over them

IMAGE SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA

ISLAM AT WAR: OTTOMANS VERSUS PERSIANS

A battle over the division among Muslims between Sunni and Shia sparked more than two centuries of war between neighbouring Islamic powers

Words by Dominic Eames

The Islamic influence of the mighty Ottoman Empire reached its peak during the 16th century. A string of sultans ruled with absolute religious and political authority as the Ottomans came to control huge swathes of the Middle East, eastern Europe and the coast of North Africa, establishing the empire as a chief global power.

They ended the millennium-long reign of the Byzantines with the capture of Constantinople, and turned the city, renamed Istanbul, into an international centre of trade and culture. From being founded around 1299 by the Turkish tribal leader Osman, the empire had expanded rapidly as the Ottomans fought for land, for power and for their religion - even if that made enemies of other Muslims.

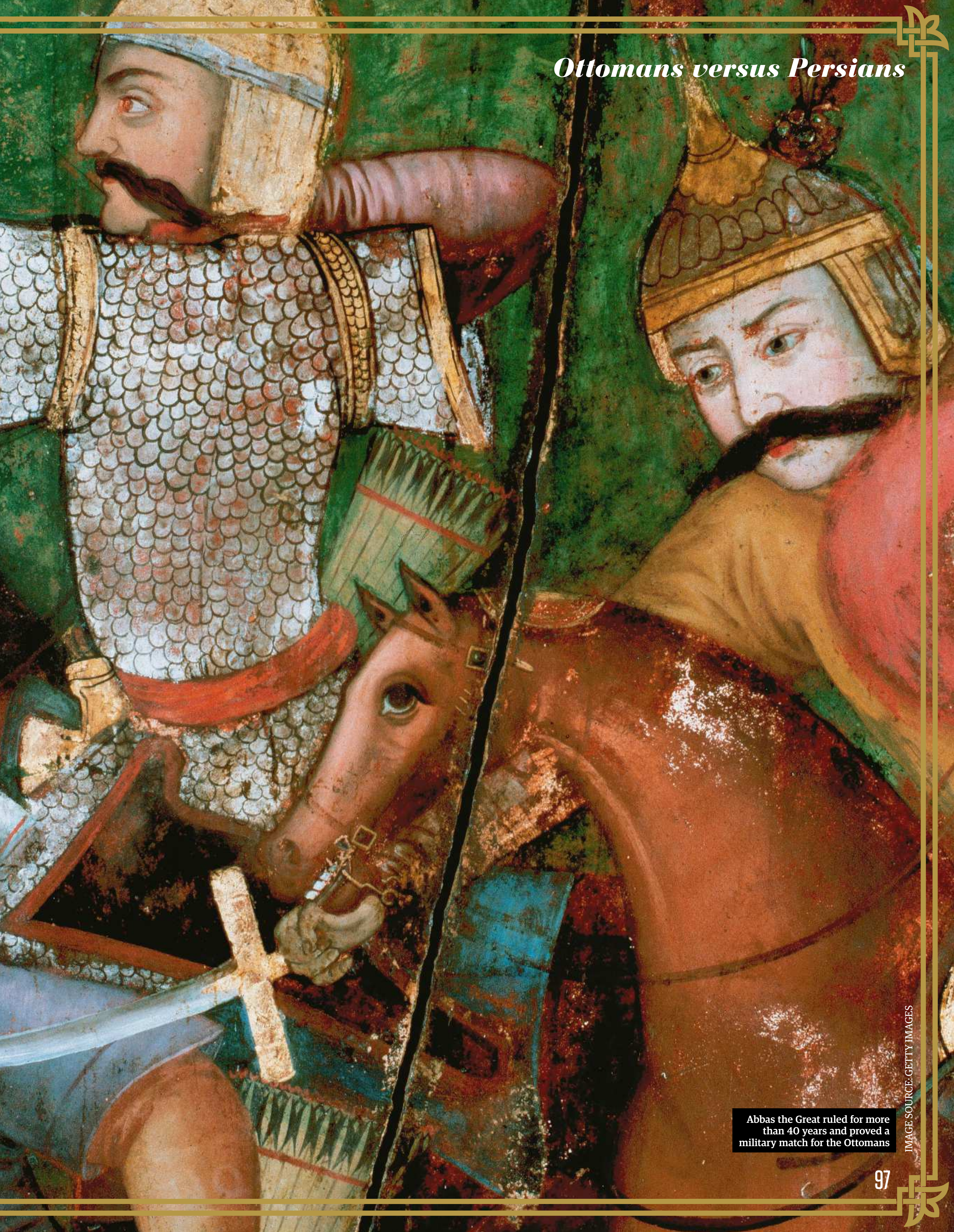
One such enemy was the Safavid dynasty in neighbouring Persia. Iran had been fractured and unstable until 1501, when along came Ismail, the young head of a Muslim brotherhood belonging to the Sufi order, who led his forces into the city of Tabriz and proclaimed himself shah. He was thought to be around 14 years old at the time, although his youth did nothing to prevent him from subjugating the whole of Iran and parts of Georgia and Iraq, including Baghdad. In a little over a decade, the Safavids had grown into a genuine threat to the Uzbek tribes and nascent Mughal Empire to the east, and the Ottomans to the west.

Ismail made the major decision to declare Shia Islam as state religion of his dynasty. He was zealous in his faith and his followers believed him divinely chosen to rule, so the establishment of Shi'ism was successful, especially as scholars were brought in and huge sums of money spent on education. Yet it also brought the Safavids in religious conflict with the Ottoman Empire, which was staunchly adherent to Sunni Islam. The Ottomans had shown tolerance of other religions - their 'millet' system allowed non-Muslim communities to have limited autonomy while still under the sultan's supremacy - but the Shia had been persecuted ruthlessly as they secured Sunni Islam as the orthodoxy.

By the time Selim I became the Ottoman sultan in 1512, he was firm in his convictions that the Safavids posed a threat both to Islam and to his rule, having seen a pro-Shia uprising in Ottoman-held Anatolia the previous year. While he restricted trade routes for Safavid silk merchants and imposed embargoes, Selim looked to eradicate the spread of Shia support more violently. He had, after all, deposed his father, then killed all his brothers (and their sons) and all but one of his own sons to protect his claim.

In 1514, Selim assembled an army 100,000-strong and launched an invasion of Safavid territory. He had written a series of provocative letters to Ismail, which, among other things, called him a perjurer and blasphemer. The shah's response was to send back

> "ISMAIL'S FOLLOWERS BELIEVED HIM DIVINELY CHOSEN TO RULE"



Abbas the Great ruled for more than 40 years and proved a military match for the Ottomans

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES

a box of opium, implying that the letters were composed under the influence of drugs. Ismail may have won the battle of words, but Selim's army proved to be far too powerful.

The smaller Safavid army was routed at Chaldiran on 23 August by a highly trained Ottoman force, including the revered elite soldiers called the Janissaries, and modern weaponry such as muskets and cannon. Ismail was wounded and nearly captured, leaving his confidence shaken enough to ensure he never led a military campaign again. Selim followed his crushing victory by capturing Eastern Anatolia and other lands before advancing on Tabriz. He could not push on to destroy the Safavid dynasty, however, as a mutiny in his army forced him to withdraw.

The Ottomans came to rue that missed opportunity as the Battle of Chaldiran was merely an opening salvo in centuries of war. The Safavids set to work rebuilding the army, while Selim went on to conquer the Mamluk rulers of Egypt and Syria, doubling the size of his empire and bringing a degree of temporary stability. To the east, at least - the Ottomans would continually face other enemies such as the tsars of Russia and the Habsburg monarchy in Europe.

When Selim died in 1520, he was succeeded by the man now universally accepted as the greatest of Ottoman rulers: Suleiman. His 46-year reign earned him the names 'The Magnificent' and 'Lawgiver'. He became sultan with the empire already at its wealthiest and yet brought greater levels of power and prestige. It was a golden age, with Suleiman promoting seismic developments in law, art, architecture, science and medicine.

Suleiman was also intent on conquest, initially in Europe as he captured the Christian stronghold of Belgrade and the island of Rhodes, headquarters of the Knights Hospitaller. His attentions turned to the Safavids in the early 1530s in a bid to prevent an alliance between them and the Habsburgs. By then, Ismail had died and his teenage son Tahmasp was shah. Suleiman and his grand viziers went on the attack in 1532 after Tahmasp had the Ottoman-sympathising governor of Baghdad murdered.

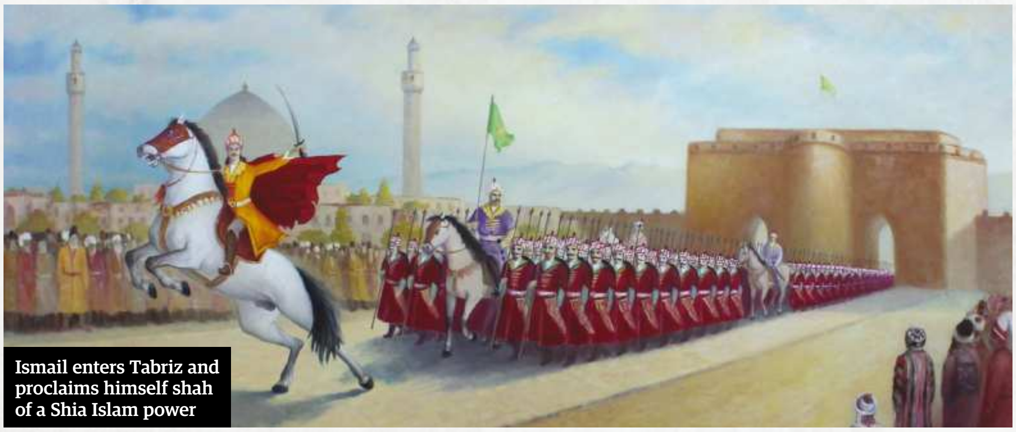
A 16th-century map of Tabriz, the Safavid capital and regular target for the Ottomans

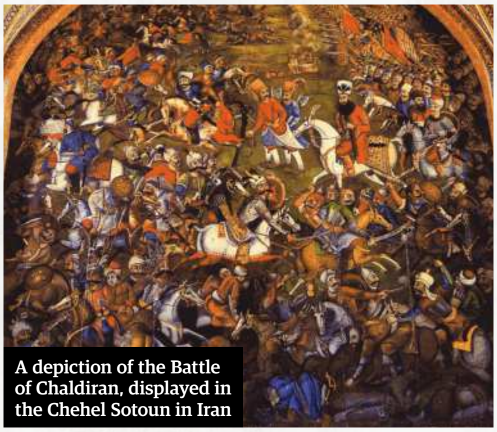
> “THE OTTOMANS SAW A CHANCE AND MARCHED BACK INTO IRAN, WINNING A SERIES OF VICTORIES”

Baghdad was one of the territories captured during Suleiman's three campaigns - and it would remain in Ottoman control until the 20th century - but he could never land a decisive blow. The enemy utilised guerrilla fighting and scorched earth tactics to hinder his army. The terrain in Iran, all desolate landscapes and mountain ranges, was treacherous and only worsened by supply problems. So in 1555 Suleiman agreed to the Peace of Amasya, which consolidated his gains while handing back the Safavid capital of Tabriz and allowing Shia Muslims to make pilgrimages to the holy sites of Mecca and Medina.

With the peace between the Muslim powers lasting more than 20 years, the Ottomans could focus on their European frontier. Yet attempts to take control of the Mediterranean ended with major setbacks. The bitter defeat at Lepanto in 1571 - several years after Suleiman had died - destroyed the navy, damaged their fearsome reputation and brought plans of further expansion to a halt.

The Safavids soon had their own problems after the death of Tahmasp in 1576. The Ottomans saw a chance and marched back into Iran, winning a series of victories including the capture of Tabriz once again and the night-time victory of the Battle of the Torches. Safavid in-fighting only intensified until a teenager named Abbas was made shah following his father's abdication in 1588. With the Ottomans occupying the west and the Uzbeks coming from the east, Abbas had little choice but to accept the humiliating terms of a peace treaty in 1590.


Ismail enters Tabriz and proclaims himself shah of a Shia Islam power


A depiction of the Battle of Chaldiran, displayed in the Chehel Sotoun in Iran

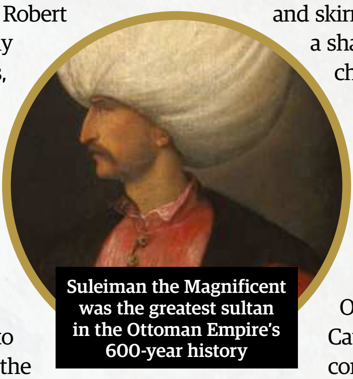
The Shah Mosque is an architectural masterpiece in Isfahan, the jewel of the Safavid dynasty

Abbas the Great, as he became known, completely changed Safavid fortunes. He reorganised civil administration, moved the capital to Isfahan and transformed it into one of the world's most splendid cities, and implemented reforms that revolutionised his military. With the help of an English adventurer, Sir Robert Shirley, he created a standing army in the mould of European powers, including a slave infantry like the sultan's elite Janissaries.

With a disciplined, well-equipped army, Abbas declared war while the Ottomans were preoccupied fighting the Habsburgs and themselves. The campaign began well with Tabriz retaken in October 1603, leading to defeated soldiers being seized by the liberated citizens and decapitated. Everything went the Safavids' way as the Ottomans struggled with a young, inexperienced sultan, failed counterattacks, and the deaths of a number of commanders. By the time hostilities ended with a Safavid victory in 1612, Abbas had regained much of the land lost by the 1590 treaty.

The Ottomans could not let this stand so the truce only lasted three years before they went to war once more, despite internal strife. Abbas proved himself a capable military leader, though, as he defeated the Uzbeks and took on the Mughals - and won. In 1618, he expertly planned an ambush on a huge Ottoman force led by the sultan's grand vizier, which gave him favourable terms at the next peace treaty negotiations.

That would not be the last time he fought the Ottomans. Another war broke out in 1623 and for years, there would be small-scale raids and skirmishes with both sides having a share in the victories. Baghdad changed hands a couple of times - resulting in the massacre of its Sunni inhabitants and the deaths of thousands of men and two grand viziers. The war eventually ended on 17 May 1639 with the agreement of the Treaty of Zuhab. It recognised Ottoman areas of control, split the Caucasus region of Iran in two, and confirmed the borders between the two powers - which can still be seen today in the borders between Iran and Iraq.



Suleiman the Magnificent was the greatest sultan in the Ottoman Empire's 600-year history

The Safavid dynasty collapsed in the 1720s, but the succeeding dynasties in Iran would remain an opponent of the Ottomans. As for the empire, from the heights reached by Suleiman the Magnificent it went into a slow decline before eventually ending in 1922. For over two centuries, these two Islamic powers fought for land and fought for power, but at the core of their conflict was the fundamental religious differences between Sunni and Shia. And those differences go back to the very beginning of Islam itself.

HOW THE ISLAMIC SUNNI AND SHIA SPLIT BEGAN

While they share many beliefs and practices, the differences between Sunni and Shia go back to the founder of Islam

When the prophet Muhammad died in 632 CE, a majority of Muslims decided that his close companion and father-in-law, Abu Bakr, should be his successor. These Muslims have since become known as the Sunni, which comes from the word 'sunnah' in reference to Islamic practice and tradition.

A smaller group, however, believed that the leadership of the faith is appointed by God so must remain in Muhammad's bloodline. This would make the prophet's cousin and son-in-law Ali his successor. They formed a movement called Shiat Ali, the Party of Ali, which has been shortened to Shia.

While it was Abu Bakr who became the first caliph, Ali did become the fourth, but just five years later, in 661, he was assassinated by members of an extremist faction of his own supporters. His elder son then abdicated his claim and his younger son Husayn was murdered.

Sunni Islam became the orthodoxy - around 90 per cent of Muslims are Sunni today - while there are three main branches of Shia. The largest is the Twelvers, who believe that Muhammad's leadership was passed to 12 of his descendants, beginning with Ali. It was the Twelver branch that was established as the state religion in the Safavid dynasty.

Shia Muslims gather in Karbala, Iraq, every year for a pilgrimage commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn

ISLAMIC HERETICS AND HERESIES

The establishment of Islamic doctrine and the influence of religious leaders have led to the identification of heresy through the ages

Words by Michael E Haskew

With the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE, a bitter struggle for the soul of the Islamic faith emerged, producing a burgeoning heretical controversy even as Islam itself was in the midst of establishing the orthodoxy that would define the mainstream belief system of the religion.

After Muhammad died, a split among Muslims, marked by extreme violence, swirled around the identification of his successor. The minority group believed that the successor of the Prophet should rise from the direct hereditary line of Muhammad. They asserted that the identification of the next leader of the world's Muslims, or caliph, centered on the elevation of Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, whom they believed was the rightful successor. These Shia Muslims were in the minority.

Their opponents, and throughout history the dominant faction of the Muslim faith, became known as Sunnis. They believed that any man might become caliph as long as he was deemed worthy to succeed the Prophet, and they promoted Abu Bakr, who had converted to Islam early in the movement and married into Muhammad's immediate family.

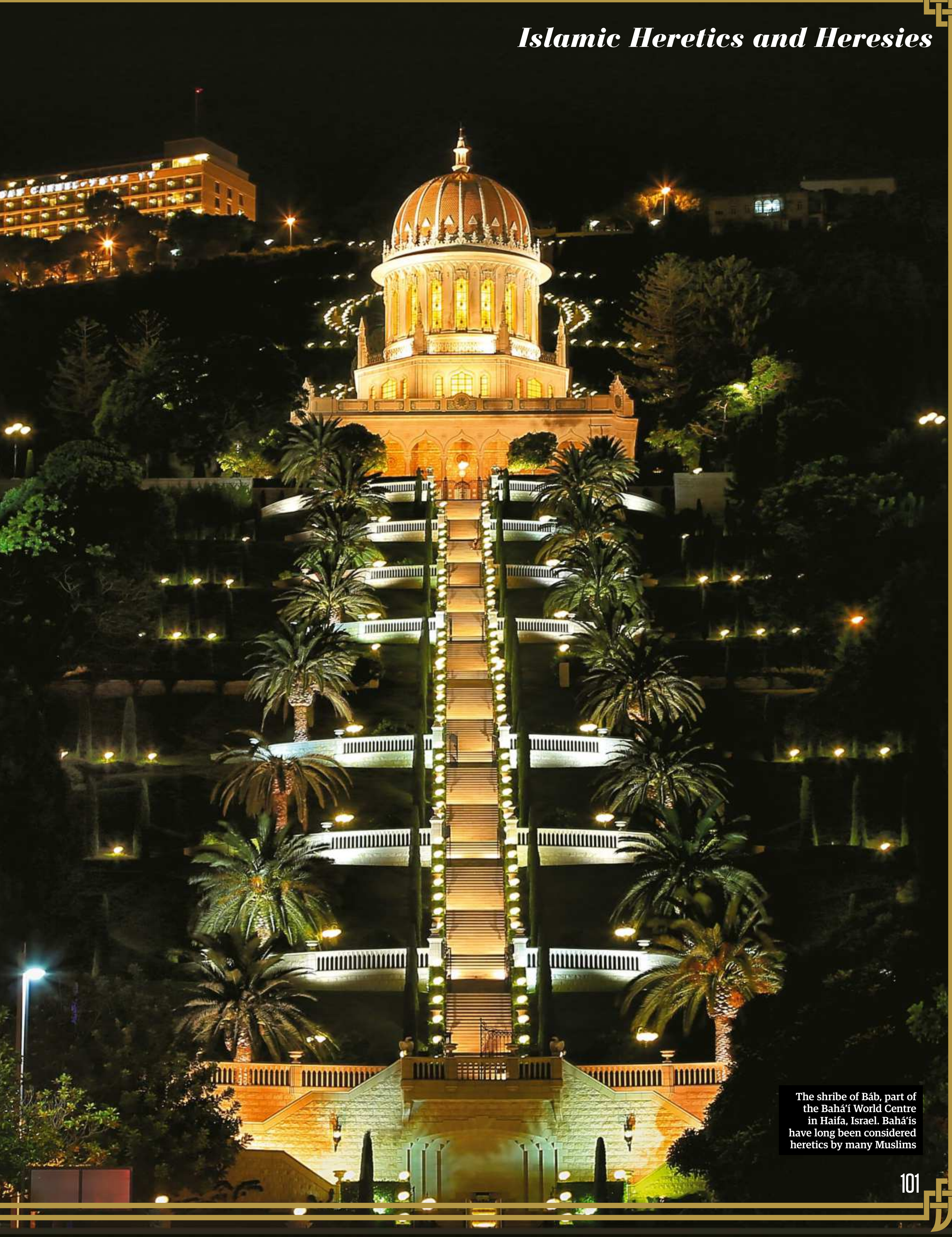
Since the earliest days of Islam, the Shia have been an oppressed minority. They identify closely with the martyrdom of Ali and his son, Imam Husayn, and celebrate their sacrifice with holidays such as Ashura, the observance of Husayn's death along with 72 of his followers at Karbala in 680 CE. Today, Shia Muslims remain in the minority and have been subjected to state-sponsored discrimination and oppression in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. At the same time, a Shia majority rules in Iran, roughly 70 per cent of the population of Bahrain is Shia, and the population of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia is predominantly Shia as well.

Each side, Sunni and Shia, considers the other "zindic", or heretic - in other words those who believe in doctrine that contradicts or is at odds with established tenets of the Islamic faith. Heresy remains distinct from apostasy, or the renunciation of the faith, and from blasphemy, improper speech or action against God.

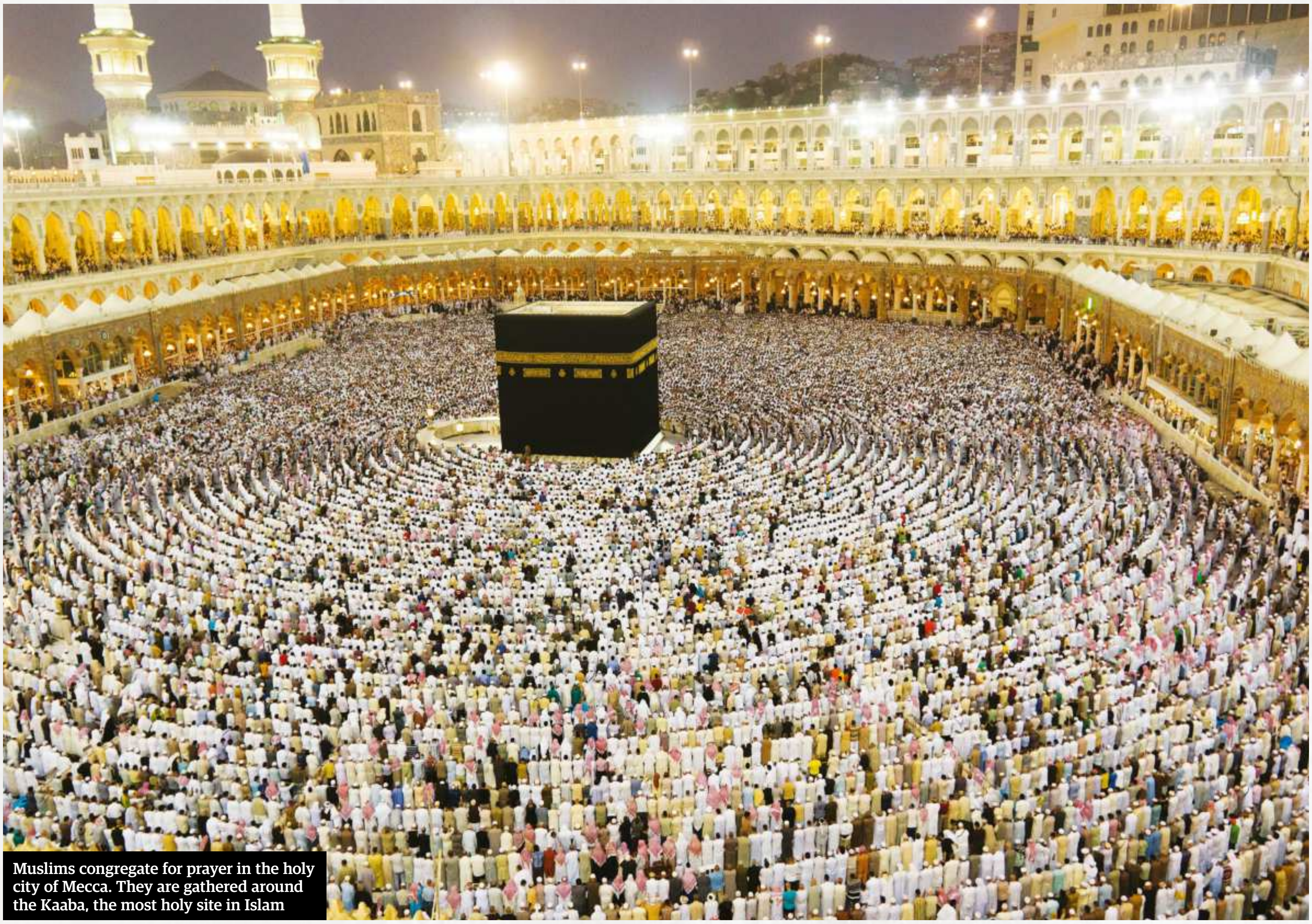
Since Sunni Islam has remained dominant through the centuries, once the doctrine was accepted and codified those whose views contradicted the establishment did so at their own peril, and quite obviously the definition of what is and is not heretical has resided with those in power at any given time. Many so-called heretics have been put to death through the centuries.

The Abassid caliphate, the third to follow the Prophet Muhammad, identified the followers of the Iranian-born prophet Mani, who were known collectively as the Manichaeans, among the early heretics against Islam. Mani's religious views embraced the struggle of good and evil in a dualistic cosmology or fundamental belief that two distinct, overarching concepts exist. Mani's religious movement was called Manichaeism, and during the 8th century CE, the Abassid caliphate considered this rival faith as a threat to monotheistic Islam.

IMAGE SOURCE: DANI LAVI 0007



The shribe of Báb, part of the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. Bahá'ís have long been considered heretics by many Muslims



Muslims congregate for prayer in the holy city of Mecca. They are gathered around the Kaaba, the most holy site in Islam

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

In 780 CE, al-Mahdi, the Abassid caliph, began a systematic persecution of the Manichaeans, appointing a master of the heretics, who investigated and brought charges against defendants. These individuals were also brought before the caliph and judged. If found guilty, they were given the opportunity to recant, but refusal meant death. Al-Mahdi ordered scholars to prepare texts that rebutted the ideas of philosophers, scientists and authors that were contrary to the orthodox Islamic doctrine, and many individuals were killed merely on suspicion of heresy alone. The persecution continued for years before ending in the early 9th century CE during the reign of caliph Harun al-Rashid.

After the rise of the Ottoman Empire, Islam had developed its belief system, intellectual support and legal framework. In 1528, when the scholar Mollah Qabiz spoke of Jesus as superior to Muhammad, his heretical proclamation was brought to the attention of Kamal Pashazada, the mufti of Istanbul and also Islam's chief authority on legal matters within the empire. Although Qabiz claimed to have used the true sources of Islam, verses from the Qur'an and the Hadit, a collection of traditional sayings and pronouncements said to come from Muhammad himself, as his basis, his conduct was condemned.

Kamal Pashazada issued a fatwa, or opinion, on the Qabiz matter, authorising the execution of the heretic. Pashazada explained that Qabiz was a heretic due to his own error that incited the error of others and his work to corrupt the faith. During this particular period, the Ottoman rulers considered themselves the defenders of the faith. Government and religion were intertwined; therefore, an attack on Islam was also an attack on the regime. Qabiz was put to death according to Islamic custom rather than the imposition of a sentence mandated by the state.

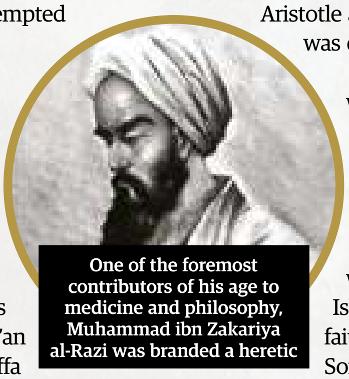
“THE OTTOMAN RULERS CONSIDERED THEMSELVES THE DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH”

With the development of the doctrinal and ideological response to heresy, the Ottomans considered themselves the defenders of orthodox Sunni Islam. Enemies of the empire were also enemies of the faith. Those who promoted alternative thought and remained technically part of the Muslim faith were heretics, while others who turned their back on Islam or were non-Muslim were apostate. For Pashazada, heresy was the act of “concealed infidelity” and “destroying Islam by Islam”.

In time, Muslim clerics and scholars have come to view heresy as criminal dissent. The heretic is the Muslim who believes, follows, and promotes activities or ideas that do not conform to the prevailing Islamic doctrine. Although the determination of heresy may be subjective at times, it also includes the promotion of religions, sects and schools of thought that originated in Islam but are considered independent religions. In such circumstances, individuals are described as unfaithful to mainstream Islam.

Among the earliest heretics of Islam was Khalid al-Qasri, who served as governor of the holy city of Mecca during the Umayyad caliphate during the 8th century. Despite his high office, Khalid developed a reputation for support of atheistic beliefs and also Christianity. Political opponents used his perspective against him, and he was thrown into prison and severely beaten twice, the second time resulting in his death in 743 CE.

One of the best-known authors and philosophers of the early Islamic period was Ibn al-Muqaffa, who was also a translator of texts into the Arabic and Persian languages. As a secretary to the uncles of the Abassid caliph al-Mansur, al-Muqaffa was regarded with suspicion after another uncle, Abdalla ibn Ali, attempted to seize the Abassid throne. When the attempt failed, al-Muqaffa was asked to write a letter to the caliph begging for forgiveness. He complied, but the text of the letter angered the caliph, who had wanted to rid himself of al-Muqaffa anyway. Certain commentaries in defence of the Manichaean movement and others that apparently mimicked the Qur'an were allegedly written by al-Muqaffa and used to condemn him to death at the hands of the governor of Basra around 759 CE. Although he converted to Islam and the writings were not unequivocally proven as his, al-Muqaffa remains historically viewed as a heretic.


One of the foremost contributors of his age to medicine and philosophy, Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi was branded a heretic

The Arab poet Abu Nuwas is remembered as one of the greats of Middle Eastern literature, and as a heretic against Islam. Forced to flee from Egypt and condemned for writing in praise of the elitist Barmakis family in Persia that had driven Caliph Harun al-Rashid from power, Abu Nuwas returned to Baghdad during the reign of al-Rashid's sympathetic 22-year-old son, writing poetry under royal commission. However, he became known as a hedonist, and his drunkenness and sexual promiscuity led to his undoing when his young benefactor was overthrown by Caliph al-Ma'mun, another son of Harun al-Rashid, who would not tolerate the excesses. Abu Nuwas died in 814 CE, after either languishing in prison or being poisoned.

Two other well-known heretics of the early period were the poet Bashar ibn Burd and the scholar Ibn al-Rawandi. Burd, condemned for writing immoral and licentious poetry, was executed in 783 CE, and al-Rawandi was widely known as a skeptic of Islam and other organised religions. Despite his contrary opinions, he lived to the age of 84 while controversy as to the nature of his actual heresy – possibly an association with Shia, a leaning toward the Western thought of Aristotle and others, or outright atheism – was debated.

Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi was born in Persia in 854 CE. His contributions to medicine, astronomy and philosophy are known worldwide and representative of the golden age of Islamic thought. However, his writings were perceived by some Islamic authorities as critical of the faith while advocating Manichaeism. Some of the attacks on his work were possibly invalid and politically motivated. He died around 932 CE.

Throughout Islamic history, other heretics have been identified, including blind philosopher Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri, historian and philosopher Ibn al-Khatib. The Sikhs became a target of heretical vengeance under Mughal rulers in the 17th century, and the Bahá'í faith, emerging in the mid 19th century, was condemned as a heresy against Shia Islam.

The identification of heretics and the suppression of heretical thought is ongoing in Islam, and one of the most notable of these was the condemnation of author Salman Rushdie to death under a fatwa issued by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* had been judged to depict Muhammad in an unfavourable manner.

Sculpture depicting Sikh martyr Bhai Dayala being boiled alive by the Mughals in 1675

RUSHDIE AND THE SATANIC VERSES

A controversial book by Salman Rushdie brought the concept of heresy into a new era

Perhaps more properly seen as a blasphemy against God than heresy, Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* was published in 1988 and ignited a firestorm of controversy across the Arab world. Rushdie, an acclaimed author of novels generally set in the Indian subcontinent, depicts Muhammad at the centre of a controversial tradition in which the Prophet accepts three goddesses formerly worshipped in the city of Mecca as divine. Tradition goes on to reveal that Muhammad later disavowed the three beings and stated that the Devil had tempted him to include verses in the Qur'an validating the belief as an appeasement of the residents of Mecca.

The book was banned in 13 countries, and Rushdie issued a statement that Muhammad was one of the greatest geniuses in world history, although he qualified that statement by adding that Muhammad was a human being and, therefore, imperfect. Still, the rancour of the Islamic establishment was aroused, and on 14 February 1989, the Shia Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa calling for Rushdie's death. A bounty was offered, and the edict eventually led to the United Kingdom severing diplomatic relations with Iran.

Although the then Iranian president Mohammad Khatami announced that the fatwa was "finished" in 1998, the order has yet to be officially lifted, and the price on Rushdie's head has risen to approximately $2.5 million. Today, Rushdie remains very much alive.

Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, is the target of a fatwa calling for his death

EVER WESTWARD

Establishing a brand-new religion in the early American republic could be a risky business, as the Mormons discovered to their cost

Words by Jon Wright

Mormonism was always destined to be a controversial faith. All the talk of prophetic visions, angels revealing the location of hidden golden plates, and stories about ancient Hebrew tribes trudging their way to the Americas back in the mists of time were never likely to pass without comment. Mormonism challenged basic Christian doctrines, sought to establish a new vision of how a church should be run, and adopted a decidedly exclusivist attitude - it was very much an 'us-or-them' affair.

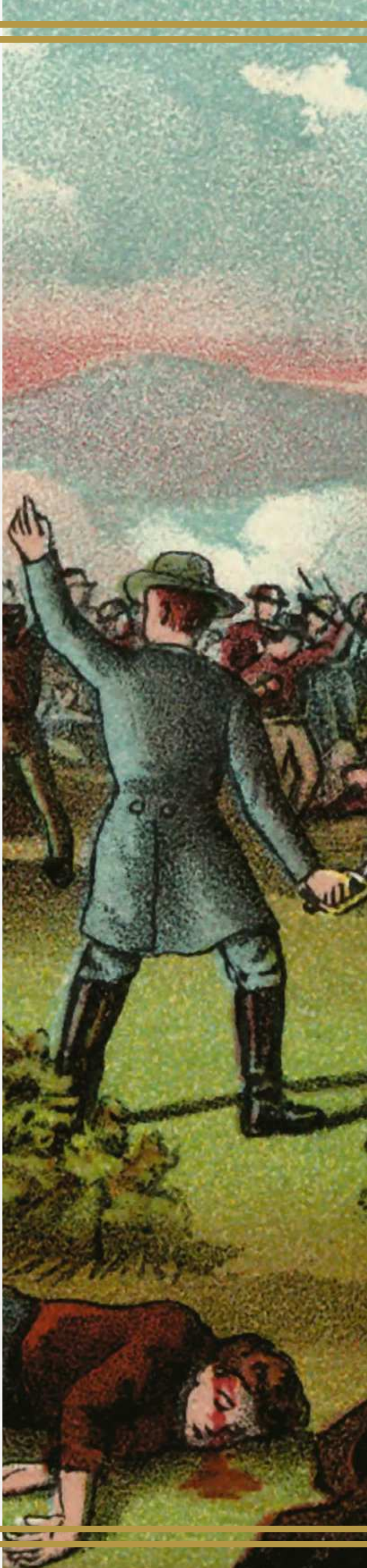
But while a nervous reaction to the Church might have been anticipated, no-one could have predicted just how badly the Mormons would be treated during their first decades. The phrase 'Mormon Wars' is often applied to the conflicts that erupted between the 1830s and the 1860s, though this is perhaps a misleading term. It is more useful to think of a series of local, violent, but usually small-scale encounters that could range from the intrusions of angry militiamen to the dispatching of federal troops.

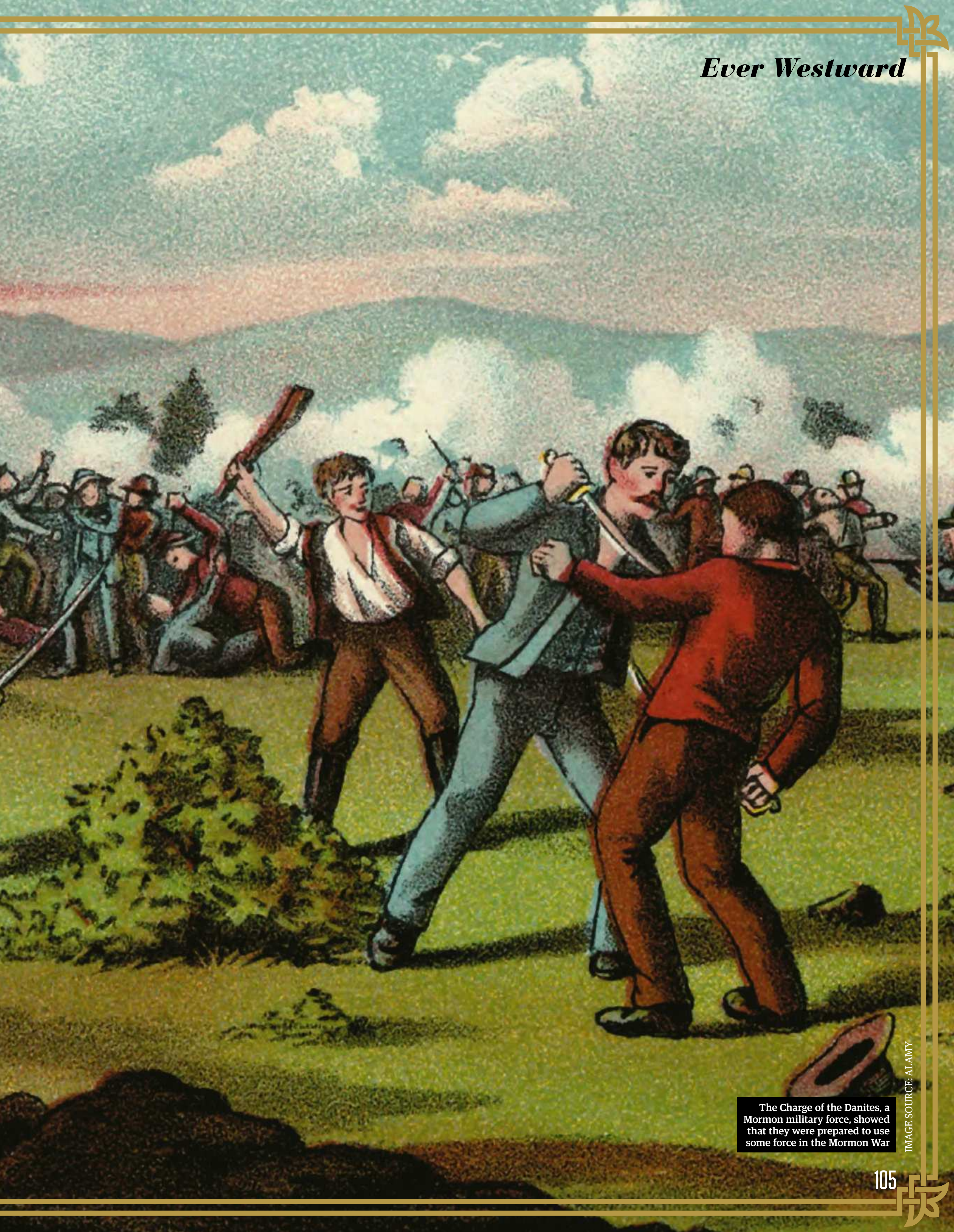
The Mormon adventure started quietly enough, with Joseph Smith receiving his theological marching orders, translating his text (the Book of Mormon) and setting up a small community. Next, it was off to Kirtland, Ohio. Smith remained in the town for six years while some of his fellow religionists headed to Jackson County, Missouri. The Mormon presence, which expanded rapidly, was resented in both places. The Church's doctrines raised eyebrows, their close-knit communities provoked mistrust and non-Mormon neighbours were not best pleased when Church members proved to be a well-organised voting bloc in local elections. Perceived Mormon sympathy for the abolitionist cause didn't help matters.

For all that, the speed with which sideways looks were replaced by outrageous acts of violence is rather astonishing. By 1832, Smith was being tarred and feathered in Kirtland, a fate shared by the Mormon Edward Partridge a year later. Partridge recalled sitting in his home on an ordinary July day in the company of his poorly wife and their three-week-old child. The mob arrived and Partridge was marched half a mile to the town square. He was offered the choice between quitting the town or facing the consequences. His reply was unambiguous: "the saints had to suffer persecution in all ages of the world" and he "was willing to suffer for Christ". In the same year, the Mormons' printing press was smashed to smithereens.

Life was no easier for the Mormons who had travelled to Missouri, the site of what is often referred to as the First Mormon War. Resented by locals, church members were sent off to Clay

> "SIDEWAYS LOOKS WERE REPLACED BY OUTRAGEOUS ACTS OF VIOLENCE"





The Charge of the Danites, a Mormon military force, showed that they were prepared to use some force in the Mormon War

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

County and then to Caldwell County, a territory that was legally established as their place of residence. For a while, calm descended. Before too long, however, complaints began to flood in about Mormons expanding beyond Caldwell and rumours ran rife about a secretive band of Mormon vigilantes - the Danites. Familiar fears about Mormons having too much influence in local elections also resurfaced.

On 6 August 1838, crowds attempted to prevent members of the Church from voting in the town of Gallatin and a bloody street battle ensued. Tales would be told of one Mormon fleeing for his life with a butcher's knife still embedded in his back, and of another Mormon fighting off the pursuing assailants with a club. In terms of brutality, the honours were even, although, remarkably, hardly anyone was fatally injured.

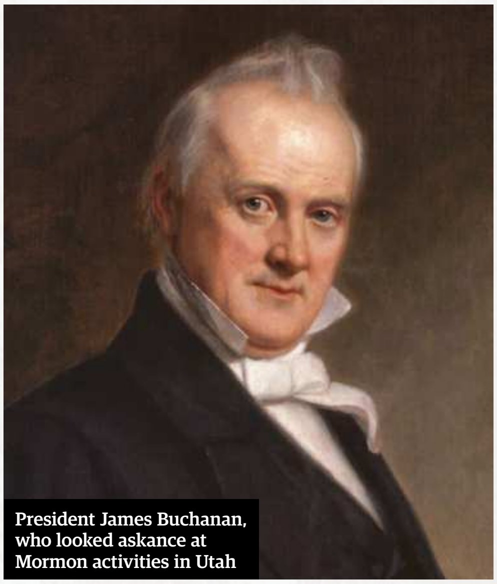
The cycle of vengeance and revenge escalated. In October 1838, the local militia stormed the Mormon settlement in a bend on Crooked River in Ray County. Mercifully, almost everyone on both sides of the conflict escaped with their lives, but the Mormons' enemies saw a golden opportunity to produce a more dramatic, entirely fictitious event of accounts. They wrote to the state's governor, informing him that the Mormons had indulged in mass slaughter of their enemies. "Between 50 and 60 men were massacred," they wrote. "Our county is ruined - for God's sake give us assistance." Such flagrant exaggeration no doubt influenced the decision of the state's governor, Lilburn Boggs, to issue the infamous executive order 44. The Mormons, it stated, "must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state".

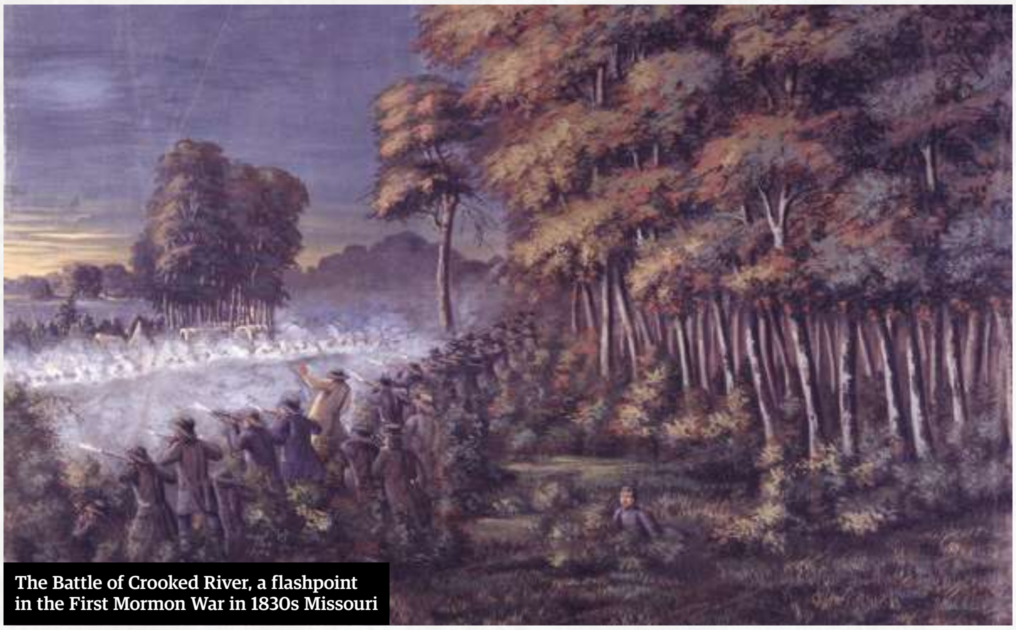
Worse was to come. Later in October, several dozen families at Haun's Mill were enjoying a lazy autumn afternoon. As one Mormon recalled, "The weather was very pleasant, the sun shone clear, all was tranquil." But then, at around 4pm, 240 or so angry locals arrived on the scene and opened fire. Most members of the settlement were able to flee but a few were forced into hiding in the nearby blacksmith's shop. Unfortunately, it was a ramshackle building, with sizeable gaps in the wooden walls. It was easy enough to pick off the occupants. The final death toll was 17 and the victims weren't even granted a proper burial. As one survivor explained, they were "not attended with the customary ceremonies of decency" because the mourners were "every moment expecting to be fired upon by the mob who, we supposed, were lying in ambush". Instead, they were buried in a trench, which had been dug during preparations for a new well.

It was, assuredly, time to leave Missouri. Joseph Smith, during these chaotic weeks, found himself being arrested. He would soon regain his liberty but, for the time being, it was left to others to lead the exodus to Illinois.

The first step was to acquire land. This was quickly accomplished and a Mormon settlement was established at Nauvoo. The population soared and rights to, among other things, form a local militia were established. Within a few years - and Joseph Smith was soon back at the helm - a Mormon population of roughly 5,000 people was settling in. Tensions arose within Mormon ranks, not least over the issue of polygamy, and Smith developed a habit of crushing dissent.

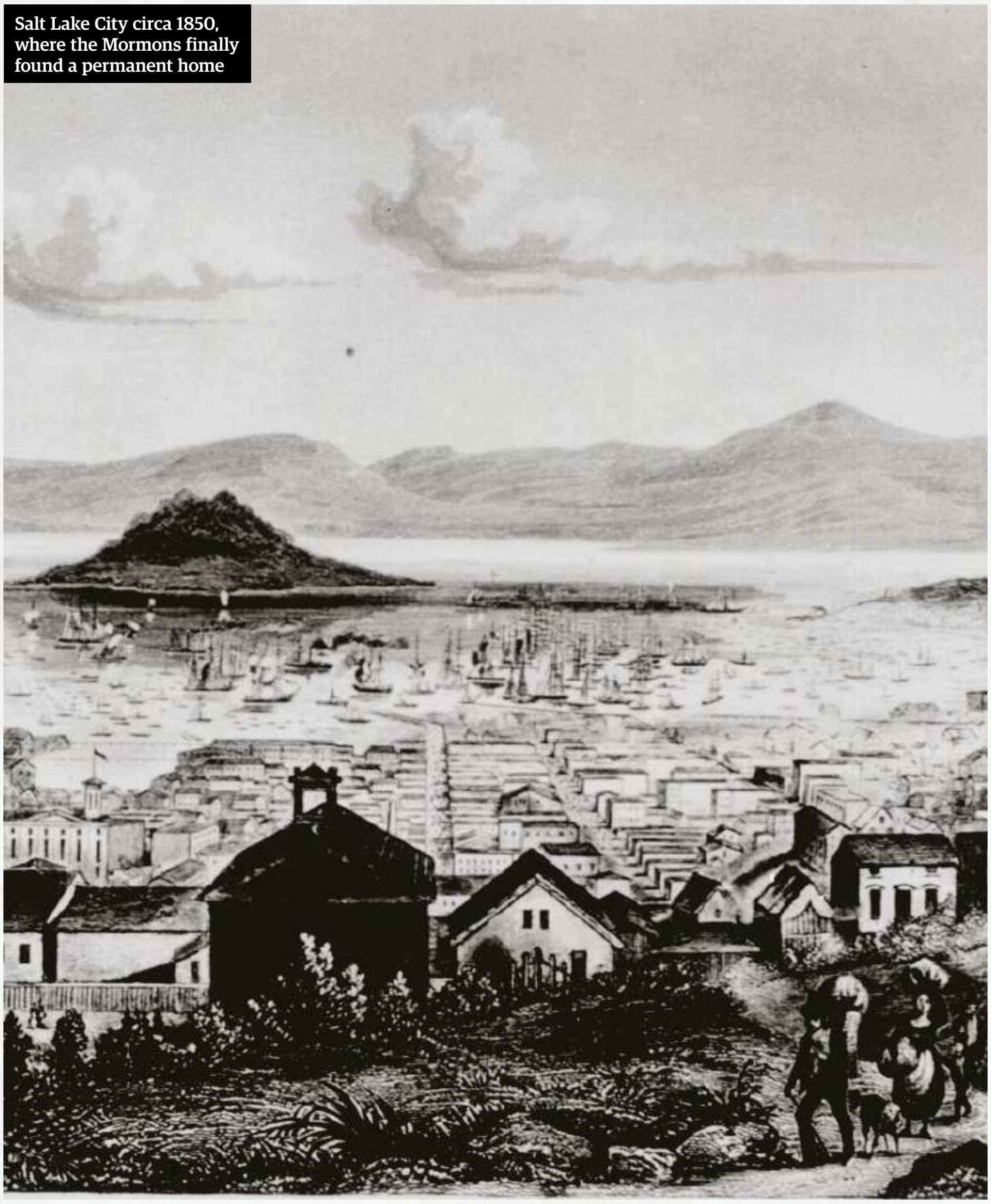
An 1845 daguerreotype of the Mormon temple in Nauvoo


President James Buchanan, who looked askance at Mormon activities in Utah


The Battle of Crooked River, a flashpoint in the First Mormon War in 1830s Missouri

The local population, following a familiar pattern, was uneasy and after rather chaotic events in 1844 - which culminated in Smith being assassinated in his jail cell - it was soon time to decamp. Clashes with the non-Mormon population became unbearable and, travelling via Nebraska, the Mormons - 8,000 strong - headed to the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Brigham Young, now the dominant figure in the movement, had high hopes. He predicted that "the exodus of the nation of the only true Israel from these United States to a far distant region of the West, where bigotry, intolerance and insatiable oppression lose their power over them - forms a new epoch".

It would not be quite that straightforward. Utah officially became part of the United States and while Young secured the position of governor, the federal government remained suspicious. It was felt by President James Buchanan, among others, that the Mormons were creating a theocratic state within a state and some even warned against the threat of outright Mormon rebellion. And so, between 1857 and 1858, the federal troops were sent in - 2,500 of them. Here we encounter another so-called Mormon war, but it was not a conflict of epic pitched battles. The Mormons sought to disrupt the activities of the government's forces, burning crops to rob them of provisions, chasing off their pack animals, and even making a din to prevent US soldiers from getting a good night's sleep. It was, though, a significant historical moment. Federal troops were now squaring off against the Church. In the end, matters resolved themselves. Brigham Young agreed to relinquish his governorship and the



Salt Lake City circa 1850, where the Mormons finally found a permanent home

Mormons were, for the most part, left in peace. From now on, criticism of the Church's beliefs would usually be voiced in the courtroom.

During these difficult decades, Mormons were not slow to complain about their ill treatment. Speaking to crowds in Cincinnati in 1839, John Green bemoaned the way in which "the Mormons are outlawed, exiled, robbed" and how the "law has been trampled down and liberty of conscience violated". And, to be sure, bilious words could be found in every bookstore and on every newspaper stand. For one critic, the Mormons represented "the most mischievous delusion that has been recorded since the creation of man" and, so far as Eber Howe was concerned, they were the "vilest wretches on earth".

Mormons were undoubtedly victims but balance requires us to remember that they committed their share of outrages, too. Relations with Native American populations sometimes became absurdly hostile. At the Battle Creek massacre in 1849 members of the Timpanog tribe were attacked under cover of night because they were suspected of stealing Mormon horses. Similar tragedies followed at the Battle of Fort Utah in 1850 and during the prolonged war, waged between 1865 and 1872, with the Black Hawk confederacy. In the midst of the Utah conflicts of 1857, Mormons would be responsible for the infamous Meadow Hill Massacre, during which more than a hundred members of a wagon-train expedition were killed.

By the end of the 1860s, the mutual animosity had exhausted all parties. Mormonism steadily became an established, if often controversial, part of the American landscape. The Church's members would now be found settling the West, riding for the famous Pony Express, and laying down tracks for the railroads that transformed the nation. This, one imagines, was hard work, but a good deal less stressful than being hounded out town or being tarred and feathered.

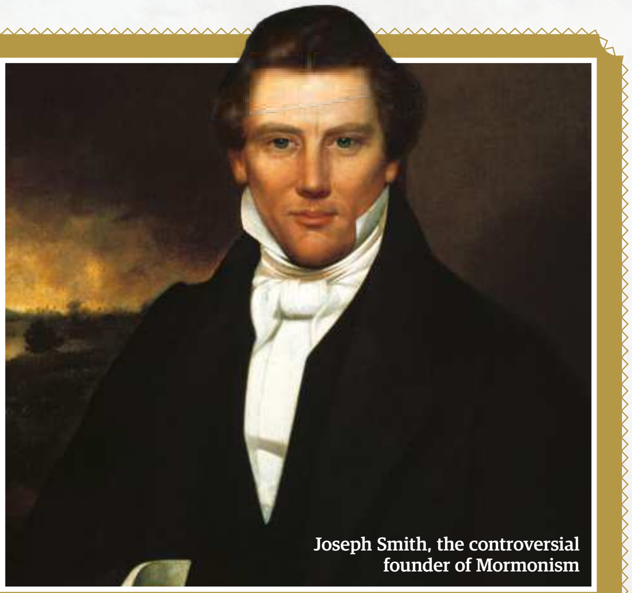
A PROPHET FOR HIS TIMES

How a farmer's son founded a world-girdling religion

Joseph Smith was not the most likely candidate to become a self-styled prophet who, by turns, transfixed, inspired and terrified 19th-century America. Born in Vermont in 1805, he travelled with his family to western New York State. This region was convulsed by the religious revivalism of the Second Great Awakening, an outburst of evangelical fervour that produced more than its share of new religious sects and movements. The adolescent Smith divided his time between treasure hunting with his father and enduring periods of severe spiritual anxiety.

Everything changed in 1820. Smith claimed to have received a vision in which God and Christ spoke to him. Three years later, the angel Moroni appeared to him – "his countenance truly like lightning," as Smith remembered it. Smith was told that his sins were forgiven and informed of hidden golden plates that recounted the astonishing history of how a Hebrew tribe had travelled to America. It would be Smith's job to embrace this tradition and to bring renewal to Christianity.

The translations followed after a few years, the Mormon Church was established, and Smith continued to reveal new prophecies and lay down the law. He caused numerous schisms, considered making a rather ludicrous bid for the presidency, and was done away with by an angry mob while languishing in an Illinois jail cell. But he surely counts as one of the most enigmatic and dynamic characters of the early United States.



Joseph Smith, the controversial founder of Mormonism

MODERN HOLY WARS

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“RELIGION HAS STOKED NATIONALIST AND ETHNIC TENSIONS FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, AND MODERN CONFLICT SUGGESTS IT WILL CONTINUE”

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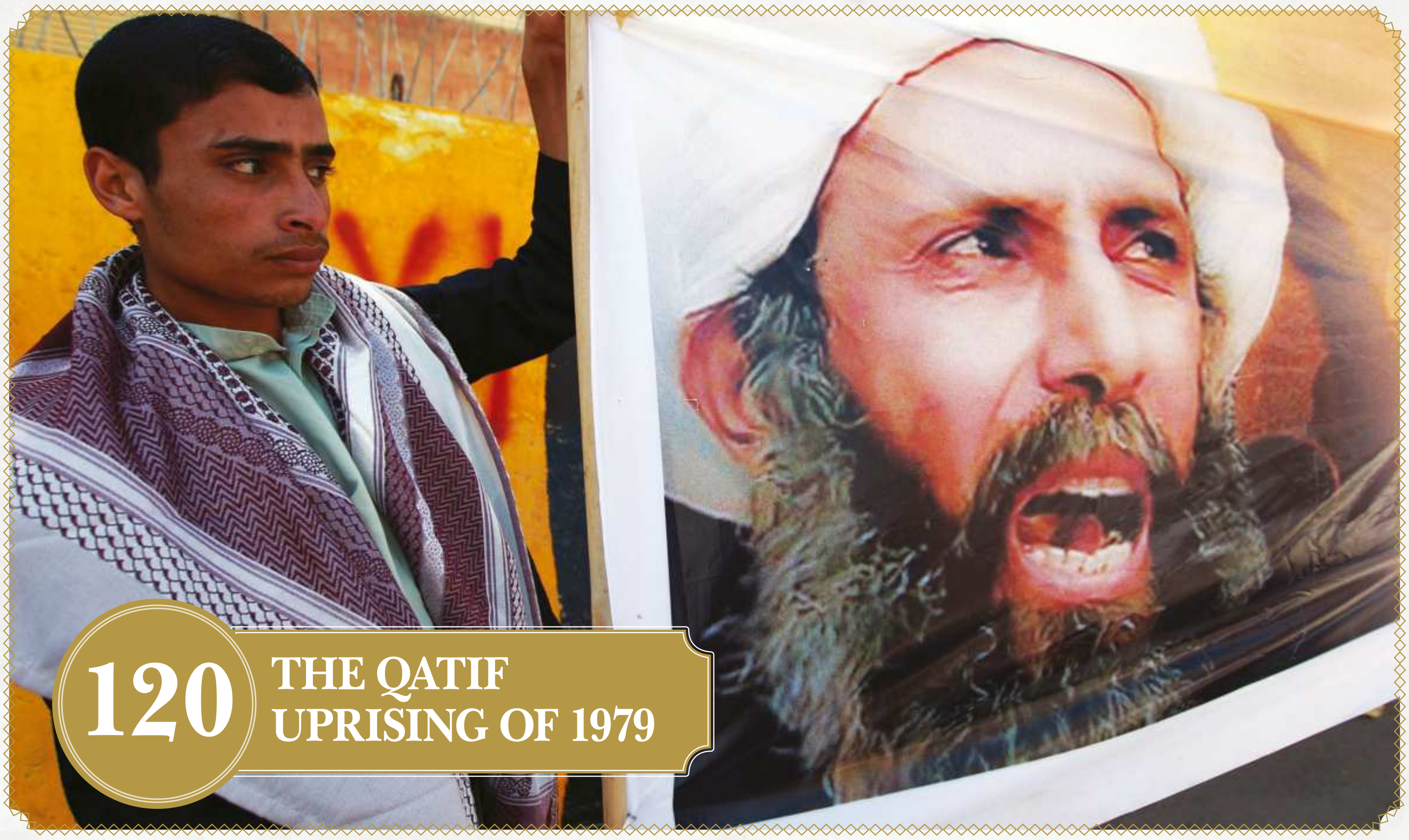

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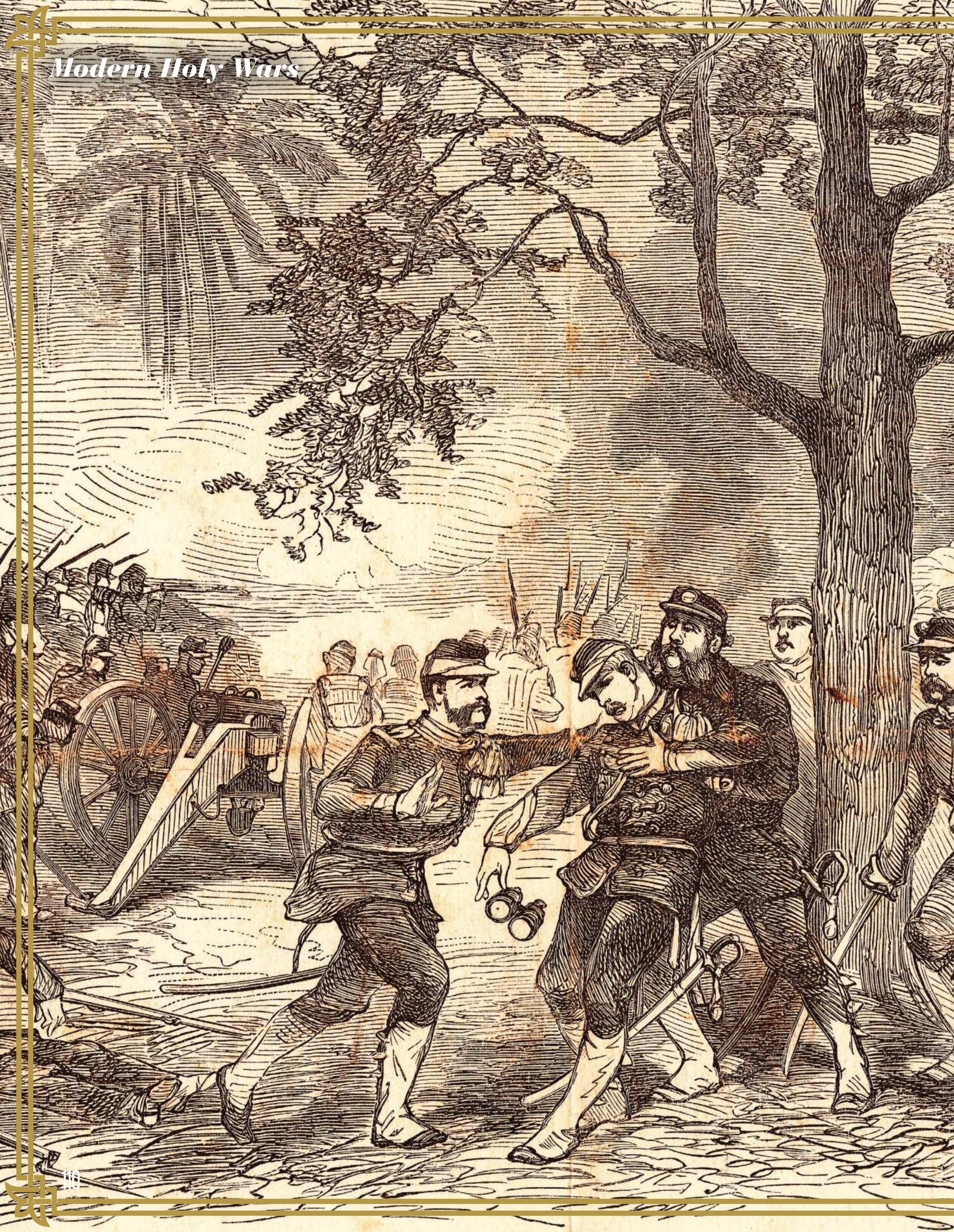


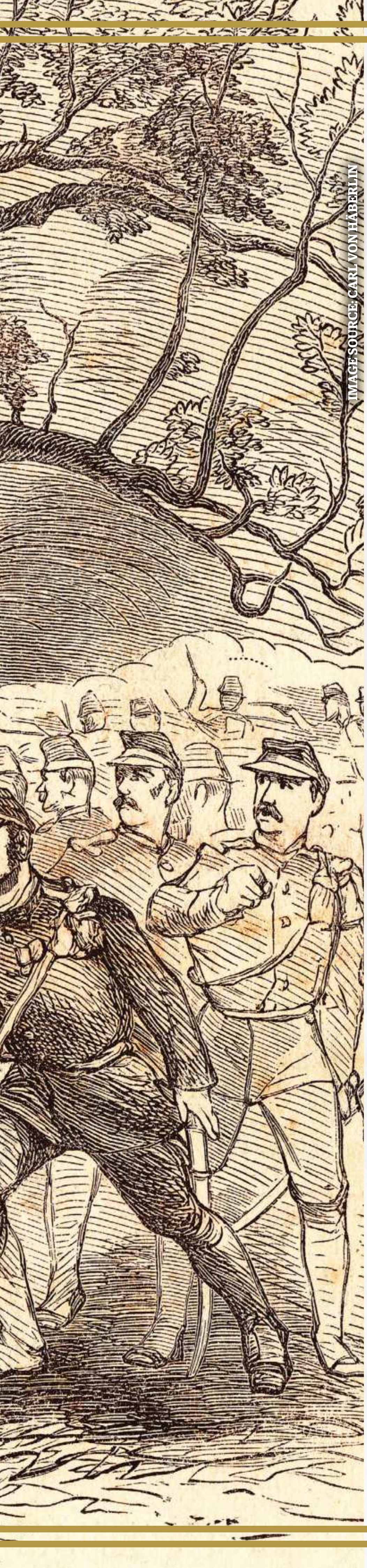


IMAGE SOURCE: CARL VON HÄBERLIN

THE FOREVER WAR

It took an act of God to end the interminable warfare on the Indonesian island of Aceh

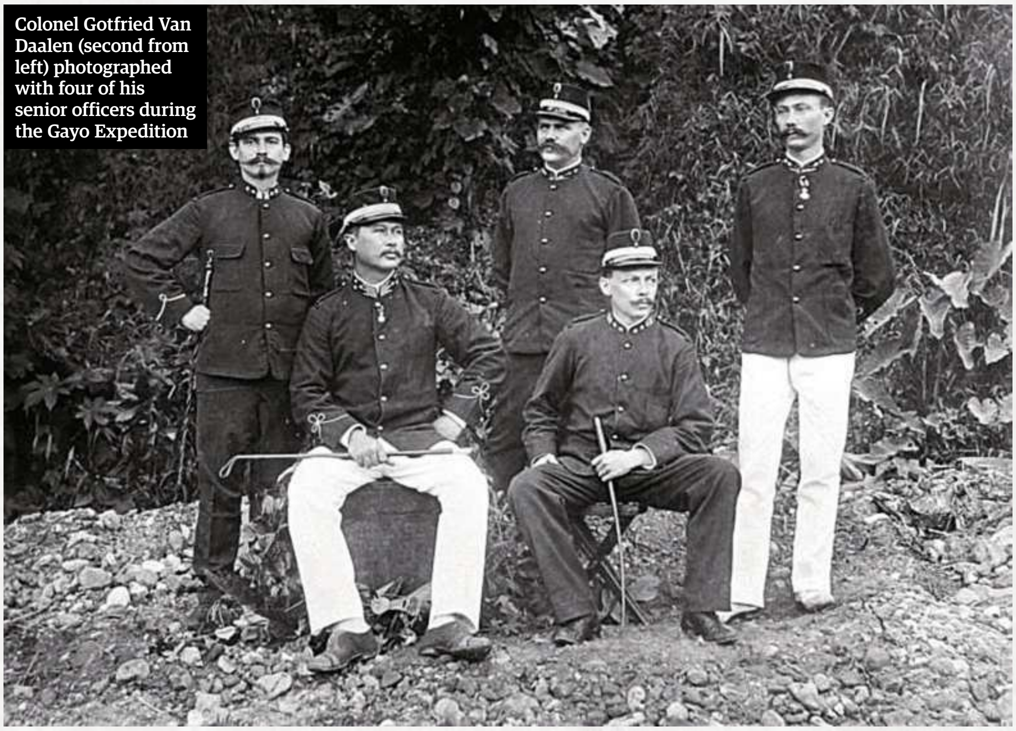
Words by Edoardo Albert

There were quite a few dirty little colonial wars during the 19th century, but few were so dirty, and even fewer as long lasting, as the Aceh War in northern Sumatra. The conflict officially ran for 31 years, from 1873 to 1904, claiming over 100,000 lives, but it never really ended, continuing in acts of violence and reprisals until the end of Dutch rule in Indonesia. Indeed, the repercussions of the war continued after Indonesian independence, leading to an insurgency against the Indonesian central government that only effectively ended because of the devastation wrought by the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004.

The Sultanate of Aceh, located in what is now the province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra, one of the many islands making up the country archipelago of Indonesia, was founded in the mid 15th century when the local rulers converted to Islam. With increasing trade, the sultans of Aceh grew rich, since they supplied half the world's pepper, a commodity that was perfect for long-distance commerce since it was low volume and high value. Among the most eager buyers of pepper were the European merchants who had first arrived in the Indian Ocean when the Portuguese discovered the route around the southern tip of Africa. The ability of the European nations to project power far from their homelands was predicated upon the superiority of European ships, that could cross open ocean while carrying considerable cargo and being armed with cannons that carried far greater fire power than anything the local potentates could muster. After the initial Portuguese expansion had come the British and the Dutch, two trading, maritime nations who fought a series of wars over access to trade in the Indian Ocean and the spice islands of Indonesia.

To end further conflict, the British and the Dutch signed a treaty in 1871 that demarcated the areas of influence of the two nations in the East Indies. By terms of the treaty, the British ceded Sumatra to the Dutch in return for a Dutch undertaking to control piracy in the region. This was the seed of what would become the Aceh War. Piracy was an engrained habit of many of the coastal communities of Aceh, a custom over which the sultan had little control. With the strategically vital Strait of Malacca running right alongside their island being the main shipping channel connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans, piracy was an immensely lucrative sideline for local people. What was more, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 had increased the amount of shipping using the Strait.

However, while the sultanate gave the appearance of being an autocracy, the power of Sultan Mahmud Syah was relatively limited outside his capital and



Colonel Gotfried Van Daalen (second from left) photographed with four of his senior officers during the Gayo Expedition

fortress palace at Banda Aceh at the northern tip of Sumatra. Piracy was the domain of local uleebelang, the secular chiefs of small communities who, in some cases, were serious rivals to Sultan Mahmud Syah. Unbeknown to the Dutch, and despite their ultimatum to the sultan, there was little he could do to curtail piracy by vessels belonging to the uleebelang. Dutch intelligence also discovered that the sultan had sent an emissary to the Ottoman court in Constantinople to seek an alliance with the Sublime Porte, potentially putting at risk Dutch control over the East Indies.

With these issues as casus belli, the Dutch declared war on the Sultanate of Aceh on 26 March 1873. A week later, on 4 April, a Dutch naval expeditionary force anchored in the mouth of the Aceh River, downstream from the sultan's 'palace' (the word palace being, in fact, a misnomer for Sultan Mahmud Syah's residence. Known locally as a kraton, it was more of a small fortified town, with 1,000 residents, two hours' march from the confluence of the Aceh River and the sea).

To clear the beaches for the landing of troops, the Dutch naval vessels opened fire, spraying cannon over the mouth of the river. The expedition, under the command of Major General Johan Köhler, consisted of some 3,500 men. Köhler wasn't expecting serious resistance from the Acehnese so it came as an unpleasant surprise when, following two days of bombardment, the first troops who landed on 6 April were still attacked. Major General Köhler lost nine men and 47 were wounded by Acehnese wielding the local klewang weapons - swords that look like a cross between a sword and a machete. Worse, the technological superiority that Köhler had expected did not seem to apply: the Acehnese had themselves acquired modern weapons.

Fighting their way inland, the first target for the Dutch was the fortified Great Mosque, which they took despite vigorous resistance. But on 14 April, with sporadic fighting still occurring, Major General Köhler, standing in the shade of a tree near the mosque, took out his binoculars to try to locate the positions of the Acehnese defenders. As he scanned the distance, he didn't realise that an Acehnese sniper was lining him up in his sights. The sniper fired, hitting Köhler and fatally wounding him. The tree, which survived the major general by many years, was later known as Köhler's Tree.

With the loss of their commanding officer, and mounting losses due to Acehnese resistance and tropical diseases, Colonel Van Daalen, who took over command, had little choice but to withdraw his forces, setting sail and arriving back in Java on 29 April 1873.

The expedition was a military and political humiliation for the Dutch. Apart from their commander, they lost 55 men and over 400 were wounded. With European control of foreign possessions relying as much on prestige as military power, it was a humiliation that could not be endured.

Having immediately imposed a naval blockade of Aceh following the retreat of the first expedition, the Dutch launched their second attempt to conquer Aceh in November 1873. This was much more serious of an affair. The expeditionary force consisted of 13,000 men commanded by a veteran of East Indies warfare, General Jan van Swieten.

Determined not to make the same mistakes as his predecessor, van Swieten landed his forces

THE COMMITTED ORIENTALIST

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje sacrificed a lot in his quest to be authentic

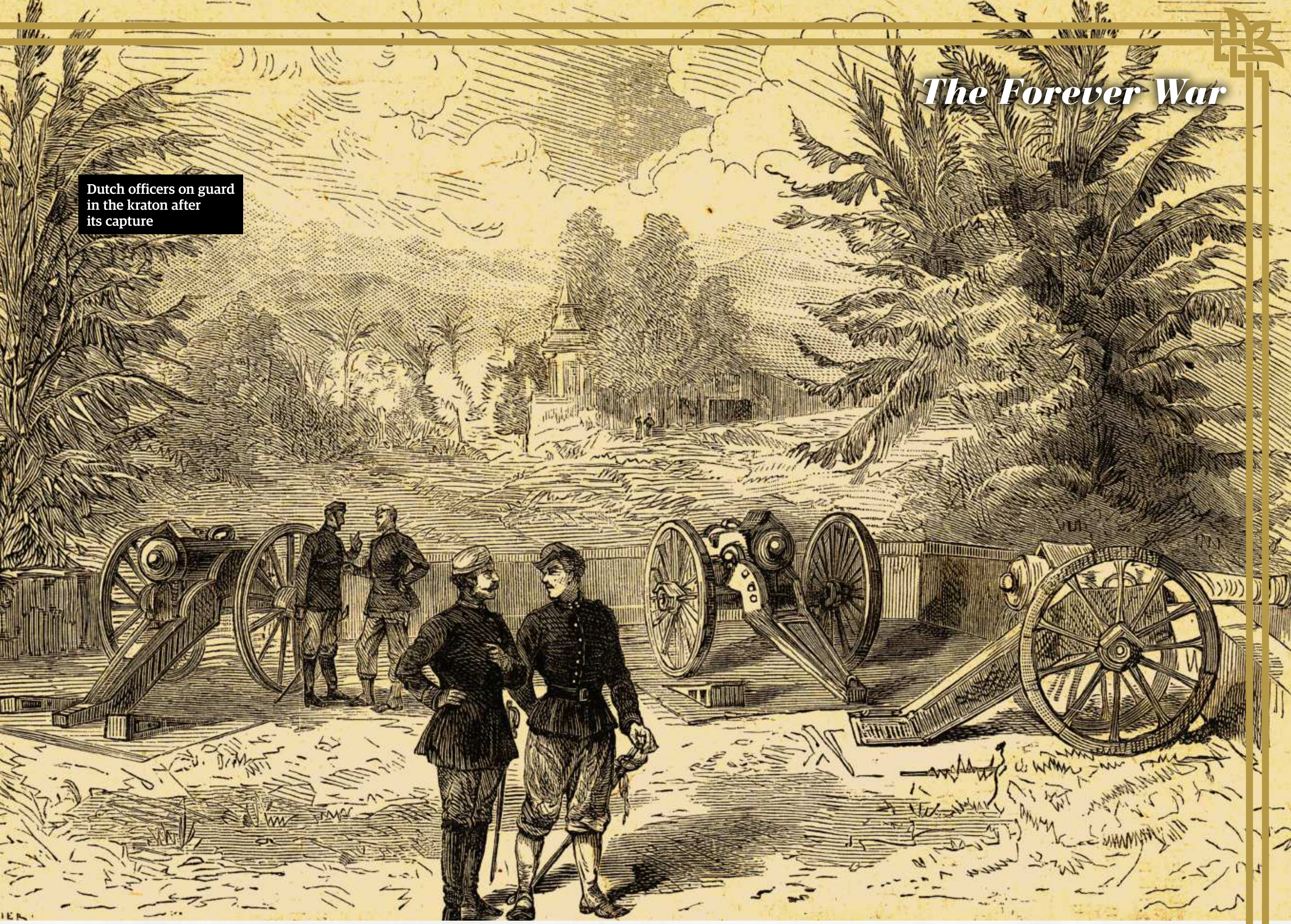
Born on 8 February 1857, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje was the son of a Protestant pastor and a mother who came from a family of pastors, so it was scarcely surprising that he should study theology at the University of Leiden. But his interest in Semitic languages had been kindled during his theology degree and he went on to study Arabic (in the end he mastered 16 languages) and Islam.

Mecca, the holy city of Islam, was still largely mysterious to the outside world, both because of its location and because it was forbidden to non-Muslims. Wishing to visit to study its society and the pilgrimage, Snouck Hurgronje needed to convince religious scholars that he was a Muslim. He already knew the language and the religion, but there was a little detail that still marked him out: he hadn't been circumcised.

On 5 January 1885, Snouck Hurgronje had himself circumcised, only to watch in horror as the cack-handed barber - barbers being the men who conducted circumcisions, normally on baby boys - made a hash of the operation and cut off the end of his penis as well as his foreskin.

Allowing himself 11 days to recover, Snouck Hurgronje presented himself to the religious authorities on 16 January and was accepted as a pilgrim to Mecca. He spent six months there and the book he wrote of Meccan life made his name as an orientalist. In case your eyes are still watering, Snouck Hurgronje later fathered five children, so the cut can't have been too unkind.

Snouck Hurgronje, in traditional Muslim dress, in Mecca



Dutch officers on guard in the kraton after its capture

east of the Aceh River, well away from any Acehnese defenders, giving him time to disembark his troops. Moving slowly and cautiously, the Dutch advanced, taking the Great Mosque on 6 January 1874. By 14 January, they had reached the outer defences of the kraton. But then nature intervened, in the rod shape of the cholera bacteria. In 1854, Dr John Snow had identified cholera as being caused by infected water, but in the breeding conditions of a tropical war zone, cholera bacteria could make hay. On 24 January, van Swieten's forces marched into the kraton unopposed: similarly affected by the cholera outbreak, Sultan Mahmud Syah and his men had fled into the interior of Aceh. Although the sultan himself died from cholera, the Acehnese forces were still largely intact.

However, the Dutch, having taken the capital and banished the sultan, thought themselves the victors. On 31 January 1874, Aceh was declared part of the Dutch East Indies and officially placed under Dutch control. Job done, General van Swieten sailed away on 16 April. The campaign had cost the lives of over 1,000 men, with another 1,000 or so wounded or gravely ill from cholera and other tropical diseases.

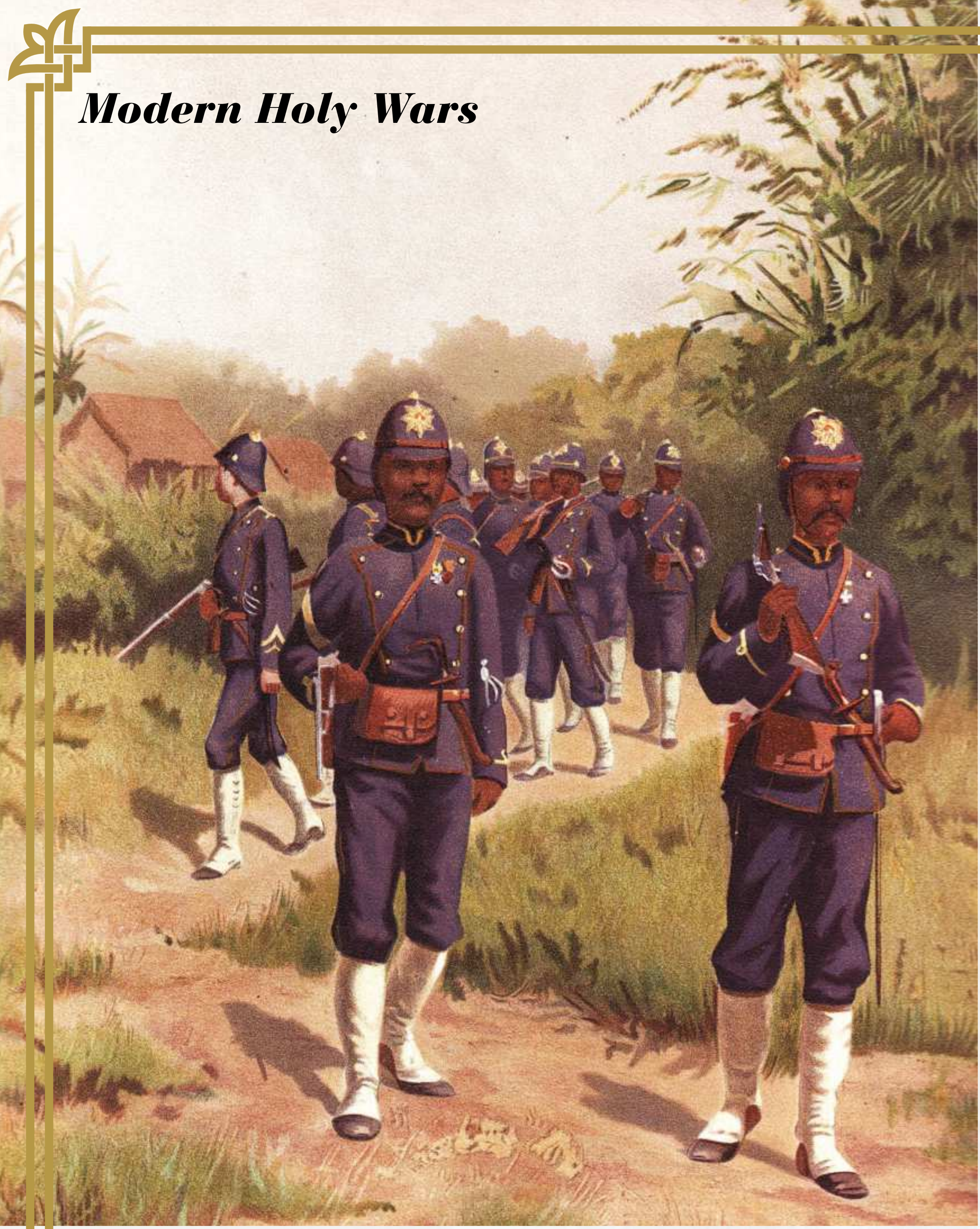
Indeed, General Cholera had proved a more deadly foe than Sultan Mahmud. He would prove an unremitting enemy over the next decade, as the Acehnese waged guerrilla warfare from the hills and jungle inland. General Pel, who had taken over from General van Swieten as commander of Dutch forces in Aceh, pursued a strategy of building a picquet line of mud forts, known as bentengs, along the Aceh River valley and the coast, aiming to isolate the interior and prevent the Acehnese there from raising funds or smuggling in weapons.

The strategy failed, in part because of a failure by the Dutch to understand the nature of Acehnese society. Although they had displaced the sultan, they had failed to realise how diffuse power was in Aceh, with each district ruled by a hereditary chief, whereas the sultan was elected by these chiefs. Rivalry between the chiefs was intense, with them all working to ensure the power of the sultan was kept to a minimum. A result of this internecine violence was that every Acehnese village was fortified and Acehnese men all had rifles and klewangs, which were viciously effective in close-range combat. Having practised war against each other for generations, the Acehnese could now turn their skills against the infidel invaders, secure in the belief that dying in battle with the unbelievers would mean a one-way trip to paradise.

By 1884, the effort to subjugate the wider part of Aceh had clearly failed. The Dutch withdrew to a ring of forts around Banda Aceh, the forts connected by a railway. To the Acehnese, this withdrawal signified Dutch weakness and their attacks redoubled. Faced with a situation that was deteriorating, the Dutch had little choice but to rescind the civilian administration of Aceh and go on to a war footing. The Dutch recruited an elite force of soldiers, the Korps Marechaussee, and deployed them on counter-insurgency operations where they used the same tactics as the Acehnese guerrillas. This was a brutal phase of the war, with reprisal killings and executions common.

The Dutch also attempted to recruit local leaders to their cause, the best known being Teuku Umar (1854-99). Having sworn allegiance to the Dutch government, and having received modern weapons and training in grateful thanks for his allegiance, Teuku Umar promptly turned against his former allies, leading his men against the outraged Dutch. Furious at this betrayal, the Dutch hunted Teuku Umar for years, finally cornering and killing him in 1899.

With the pacification of Aceh clearly failing, new ideas were needed. They were supplied by Major (later General) Johannes van Heutsz, who was appointed governor of Aceh in 1898,



and Dr Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, a scholar of Arabic and Islamic studies, and one of the first Europeans to visit Mecca, which he travelled to in 1885. Fluent in Arabic, and soon after fluent in Acehnese, Malay and Javanese, Snouck Hurgronje travelled to the Dutch East Indies in 1889 and married the daughter of a local nobleman – to the shock of Dutch settlers.

In 1891, he went to Aceh where, under the name of Haji Abdul Ghaffar, he became friendly with religious scholars, the ulema, of Aceh, some of whom were instrumental in continuing the war. Having got to know the situation, Snouck Hurgronje wrote a report advocating a policy of winning the support of the local aristocracy and intelligence-directed espionage. Nevertheless, he also identified some among the ulema who could not be placated but only defeated through military means, although he strongly opposed the use of terror tactics.

The new governor, van Heutsz, appointed Snouck Hurgronje as his advisor for indigenous affair and set about following his recommendations while ignoring his strictures against terror tactics. A notable example of the latter was the Gayo Expedition. General van Heutsz appointed Colonel Gotfried Van Daalen to break the remaining opposition, which he did in sanguinary fashion, using the Korps Marechaussee and scorched-earth tactics to deny the Acehnese resistance any bases from which to continue the fighting. The fighting was brutal, killing at least 2,900 Acehnese of which over one-third were women and children. But the tactics were effective and by 1903, the leaders of the Acehnese resistance agreed to lay down their arms.

The tactics employed by Van Daalen horrified Snouck Hurgronje and he resigned from his position as advisor on indigenous affairs. But for the Dutch, General van Heutsz was the man who had cauterised the bleeding wound of Aceh – a wound that had bled vast amounts of money from the Dutch treasury as well as blood – and he was treated as a hero and, in 1904, appointed governor of the entire Dutch East Indies.

However, while van Heutsz had succeeded in wiping out organised resistance, limited local resistance continued, particularly in the hilly, inaccessible interior of Aceh. General van Heutsz continued to use the mobile troops of the Korps Marechaussee to deal with these flare-ups but by 1913 any last vestiges of organised resistance had been effectively ended. The war was over.

Not quite. While the war was over, the killing, sporadic, disorganised and bloody, was not. Among certain sections of the Acehnese, an ideology of jihad, holy war, had spread, complete with exhortations to murderous martyrdom in the cause of jihad. The key verse of the Qur'an used to justify suicide attacks within this ideology was "God has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill,

General van Heutsz and his staff observing operations

VAN HEUTSZ met STAF
BATÉ ILIE
NIEUWENHUIS f

“FOR MANY ACEHNESE, THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS, DOMINATED BY THE JAVANESE, WERE NOT MUCH PREFERABLE TO THE OLD ONES”

The height of the tsunami wave can be seen on this surviving house in Banda Aceh

and are killed” (9:111). With an Acehnese language work, the *Hikayat Perang Sabil*, providing further justifications of and exhortations to martyrdom circulating among the many displaced people in Aceh, there remained a core of Acehnese willing to take up their klewang and launch sudden, unexpected attacks on the Dutch. While the numbers killed by were small, they were sufficiently frequent, and caused such horror among the Dutch since the targets were often women and children, that they produced a new Dutch phrase: “Atjeh moorden” (“Aceh murders”). Railway stations and other public places were often chosen as the theatres for such attacks.

However, while the attacks persisted, they made little difference to either Dutch rule or the general attitude of the Acehnese towards their colonial governors. For the Acehnese, the Dutch remained kaphé (the Acehnese pronunciation of kafir), unbelievers and, as such, in a telling linguistic detail, in daily Acehnese conversation were always referred to by the familiar Acehnese pronoun rather than the one that conveyed respect.

When the Japanese landed on Sumatra on 14 February 1942, they were initially greeted as liberators by sections of the Acehnese population. For the Dutch, fighting a rearguard action against the Japanese, this proved particularly difficult as their positions were often betrayed to the Japanese by the Acehnese. By 28 March the island had fallen to the soldiers of the emperor.

However, the Acehnese welcome of the Japanese soon soured and by November they were rebelling against their new rulers, again led by religious scholars, the ulema. The revolt was put down with the customary brutality of the Japanese army. With the end of World War II, the Dutch made a half-hearted attempt to regain control of the Dutch East Indies, although in these efforts they bypassed the incorrigible Acehnese, before agreeing to transfer sovereignty to the new state of Indonesia on 27 December 1949.

For many Acehnese, the new arrangements, dominated by the Javanese, were not much preferable to the old ones, which led to a rebellion in the 1950s, suppressed by the Indonesian military, and a longer campaign for independence that lasted from 1976 to 2005, only ultimately ending when the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004 devastated Banda Aceh and the whole region.

THE WAVE THAT STOPPED A WAR

The Indian Ocean tsunami had one good side effect in Aceh

On 26 December 2004, a 1,303-kilometre stretch of the fault line that runs through the Indian Ocean, west of Sumatra, ruptured. It was the third largest earthquake recorded and 20 minutes later the first of three waves hit Banda Aceh. The city was devastated and 167,000 people killed. But in the aftermath of the disaster, with the capital and the wider province of Aceh in ruins, the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement, that had been engaged in a long and bloody struggle for control of the province, decided to sit down and talk rather than resume the fighting.

Aceh had been in a state of military emergency for a year, even after a period of martial law, as the conflict that had started in the 1970s, between Acehnese wanting independence from the Indonesian central government, had intensified. Between 1999 and 2001, 200,000 people had been displaced as a result of the war, with a further 125,000 displaced in 2003 when the military emergency was declared. But the black waves ended this and, on 15 August 2005, the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian government signed a peace deal that saw the rebels disarm and the Indonesian government agreeing to Aceh being self-governed but not independent.

Teuku Umar, the Acehnese leader who took Dutch guns after swearing allegiance to them and then used them against the Dutch

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN WORLD WAR I

Among the reasons for the empire joining the Great War lay a religion

Words by Jem Duducu

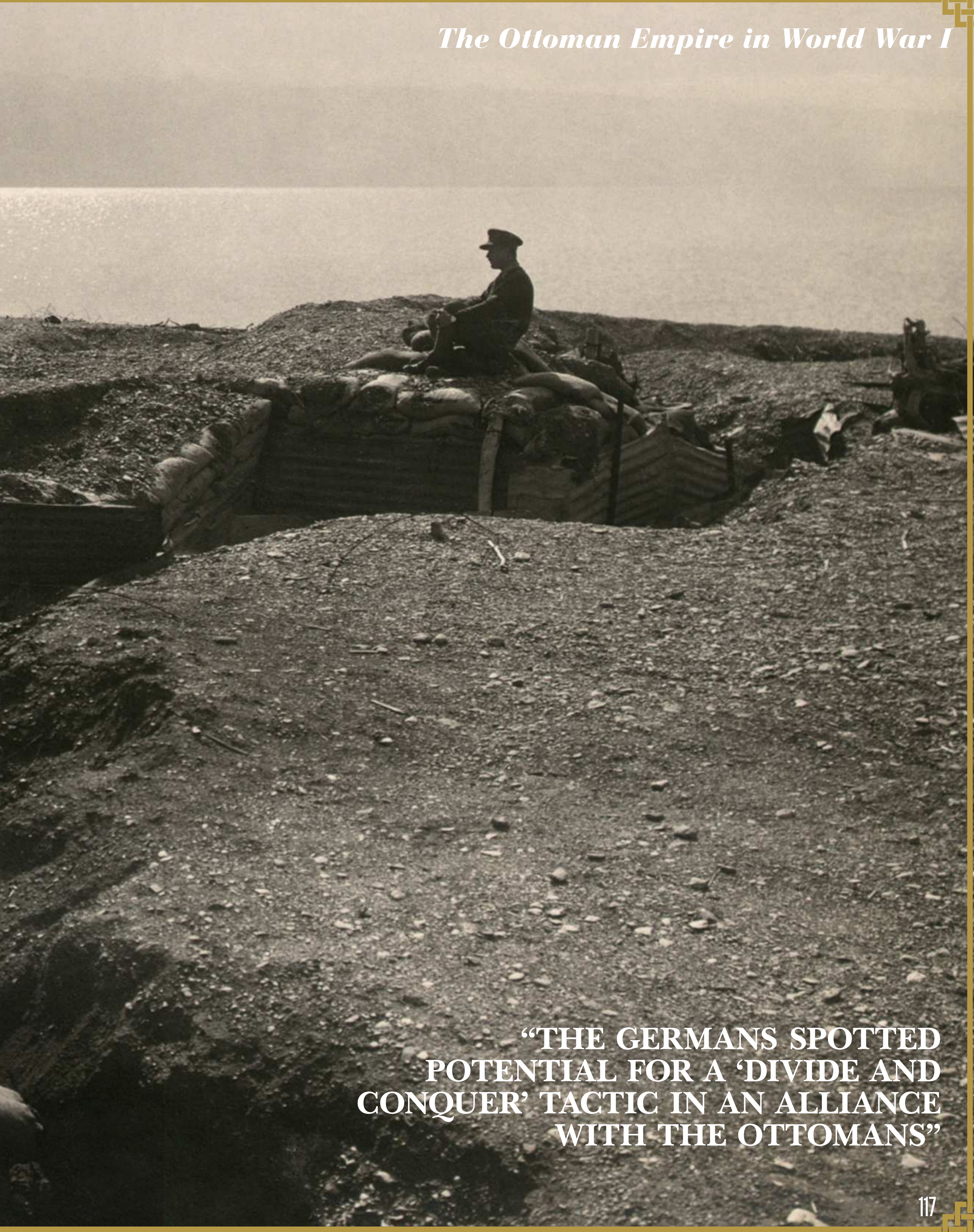
Prior to World War I, Germany had one major strategic concern: encirclement by hostile powers. Late 19th- and early 20th-century German foreign policy must be examined and understood through this fear that was to become a reality with the various agreements among Russia, France and Britain. These forced Germany to cast around for allies of its own. The least intuitive one was the Ottoman Empire, a power which, just 50 years earlier, had been fighting alongside Britain and France against Russia. However, over the intervening decades, much had changed, and while the Ottoman Empire was well past its prime, it did offer up a number of potential strategic advantages.

First, the Ottomans and the Russians were longstanding enemies.

This meant that in the event of war, Russia could not send all of its forces west as it would still feel the need to protect its lands around the Black Sea and in the Caucasus. As events unfolded, there would be fighting between these two powers in these regions during the war.

The second consideration was a little more esoteric. During World War I, Germany attempted multiple times to distract the Allies with potential uprisings in their own territories. A famous example of this occurred when they allowed Lenin to return to Russia, which led to the Communist Revolution and the subsequent civil war that knocked Russia out of World War I. The Germans spotted further potential for this 'divide and conquer' tactic in an alliance with the Ottomans who could call for jihad within their Muslim territories.

Jihad means 'struggle' in Arabic. The Qur'an talks about jihad not in the modern context of mayhem and violence, but as the everyday human struggle to embrace the spiritual when surrounded by earthly distractions. The call for all Muslims to unite in holy war at the behest of the rightful caliph was a precedent that went back more than 1,000 years. The caliphs were the Arab descendants of the leaders of the original Muslim empire, the last of whom was murdered by the Mongols in 1258. But with the rise of the Ottomans, a Muslim empire developed that would eventually rule over the three major cities of Islam: Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. The Ottoman sultans were Muslim and held a number of holy relics of the Prophet himself. All of this meant that they could legitimately call themselves the new caliphs, which gave them the right to call for jihad, and good Muslims around the world would have to obey. This was a potential disaster for Britain, whose territories on the subcontinent and beyond were home to tens of millions of Muslims.



“THE GERMANS SPOTTED POTENTIAL FOR A ‘DIVIDE AND CONQUER’ TACTIC IN AN ALLIANCE WITH THE OTTOMANS”

The Battle of Megiddo helped bring the Ottoman involvement in World War I to a close

The Ottoman Sultan Mehmed V was under immense pressure to side with the Germans. Mehmed V was a quiet man, a poet who had spent his first 30 years isolated in 'the cage', a place of solitary confinement for any male relative to the sultan. He was neither a great statesman nor a great warrior, and he was in his 60s when he was finally girded with the sword of Osman. He was old, low energy and largely disinterested in the day-to-day affairs of state. As a result, real power now was under a triumvirate known as the Three Pashas.

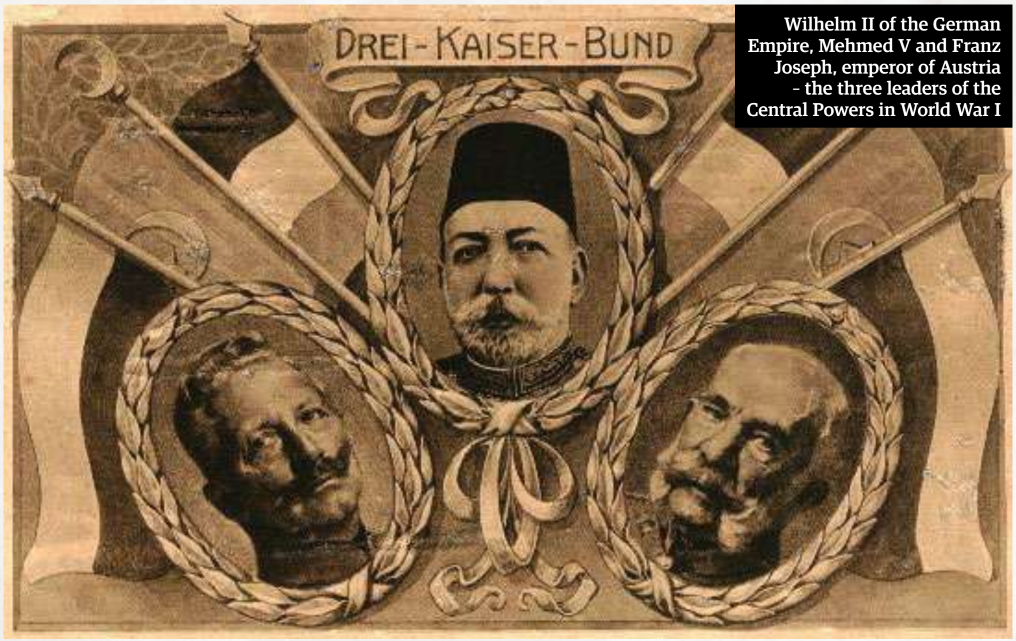
Germany's understanding of the power of Britain in the East can be shown by the first campaign of the war between the Ottomans and the British. As the Ottoman Empire bordered Egypt, it was thought possible that a joint Ottoman-German force could spring a surprise attack and capture the Suez Canal, thus cutting Britain off from its Asian territories. Initial probes led to the British Imperial Bikaner Camel Corps fighting in the desert near El Qantara against a Bedouin militia. The ambush was successful, but the camel corps lost around half of its men in the fight.

The main Ottoman force was led by one of the Three Pashas, Ahmed Çemal, and General Friedrich von Kressenstein. They had prepared a number of supply depots, and engineers had gone ahead to drill wells to supply fresh water across the Sinai desert. All of the careful preparations were to allow the Ottoman force of about 20,000 to travel undetected right up to the edges of the canal. Von Kressenstein was also the designer of the pontoon bridge to get the Ottoman forces over the Suez Canal and on into Egypt. Had this raid been conducted just ten years earlier, it would have worked. The organisation was excellent, and the large force travelled across the desert without succumbing to any ambushes or logistical problems. But von Kressenstein had overlooked one development: the recently invented airplane. The British had a few aircraft circling the Sinai looking for any potential Ottoman attacks.

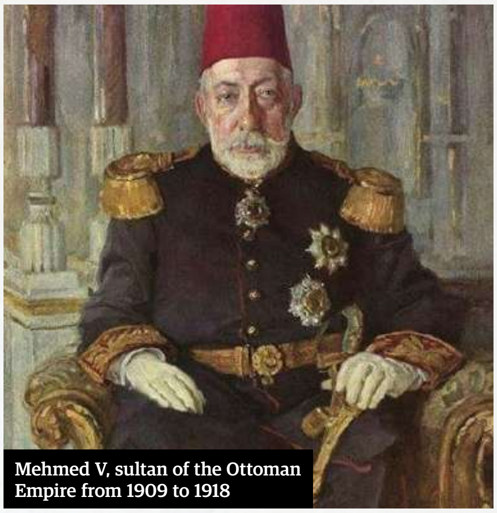
The British were waiting. Warships were anchored in the canal and used as mobile gun platforms. There was also an armoured train with artillery and heavy machine guns. The fighting was vicious and only a small number of Ottoman troops made it across the Suez Canal, but they were beaten back. The Ottoman forces retreated into the Sinai but the British failed to pursue.

All of this happened a few months before the attack on Gallipoli. In some respects, the British attack on the Gallipoli peninsula had similarities to the Ottoman-German attack on the Suez Canal. Both plans were based on the undeniable logic that success would deal a major blow to the enemy, but both failed for different reasons. In the case of Suez, the troops were spotted well before the attack could take place. In the case of Gallipoli, the errors were multiple. There was poor mapping of the inland areas; the navy and army acted as rivals. After the landings, advances were too slow. The momentum of the landings ebbed away in the critical hours of the first couple of days, leading to a deadlock just as onerous as the Western Front.

It was time for Mehmed V to declare jihad, which he duly did… and then… not a lot happened. There was some civil disobedience bordering on a riot in Singapore amongst Muslim dockworkers, and that was it. The miscalculation of the whole plan rested on a misunderstanding of what religion is to most people: something which moves people in different ways. In this instance, being told to rise up by a distant and irrelevant figure didn't have much impact simply because people had more immediate things to worry about than making sure Mehmed V was happy. The Ottomans were going to have to be a



Wilhelm II of the German Empire, Mehmed V and Franz Joseph, emperor of Austria - the three leaders of the Central Powers in World War I



Mehmed V, sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1909 to 1918

The official Ottoman declaration of holy war against the Entente Powers in 1914

Enver Pasha was the Ottoman minister of war from 4 January 1914 to 13 October 1918

more conventional German ally, and they were with some success.

In late 1915, while hundreds of thousands of British troops were committed to Gallipoli and fighting in the Caucasus, an expeditionary force of over 30,000 Indian troops landed at Al-Faw in modern-day Iraq. The force was intercepted and besieged at Kut.

The siege lasted for more than four months as Ottoman reinforcements tightened the noose. The force suffered light casualties, but tens of thousands of British servicemen were now prisoners of war. It was a colossal humiliation for the British and yet another sign that the Ottomans were far from finished. The news of the capitulation at Kut was almost simultaneous with the retreat from the Gallipoli peninsula. The fight with the Ottoman Empire was not the easy victory Britain had expected.

In March of 1917, General Sir Archibald Murray amassed thousands of British imperial troops to break out into the Middle East proper through the town of Gaza, then held by the German General von Kressenstein. Murray led the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) and surrounded the city, where he launched an all-out assault. It failed and there would end up being three Battles of Gaza before victory finally went to the EEF in November 1917.

Nearly a year later, the EEF pushed further north until they met one of the last remaining Ottoman field armies at Megiddo in September of 1918. The industrial scale of death that took place throughout the war led to many British soldiers conclude, with some trepidation, that the blood-drenched imagery in the Bible's Book of Revelations might be coming true. Part of the prophecy described a mighty battle at Armageddon, a transliteration of 'Megiddo', so forces were uneasy about fighting there, fearing they might be witnessing the end of days.

As it turned out, the prophecy wasn't true, but it was Armageddon for the Ottomans. For the 35,000 men on the Ottoman side, supported by over 400 artillery pieces, the battle was a disaster. General Allenby used a creeping barrage to cover the advance of his troops, including an impressive cavalry charge.

Of the 35,000 Ottoman soldiers at the battle, only 6,000 escaped being killed, wounded or captured. It was the biggest defeat the Ottomans suffered in World War I and, on 30 October, the Armistice of Mudros ended hostilities in the Middle East.

SAILING INTO THE GREAT WAR

The naval debacle behind the Ottomans' entrance

The trigger that took the Ottomans into World War I was somewhat strange. Before the build-up to the conflict, the Ottoman government had ordered two new warships from Britain, which were to be called the Sultan Osman and the Reşadiye. When delivery of the vessels was delayed, tensions between the Ottoman navy and the ship builders increased.

By the summer of 1914, both ships were ready, but the engineers claimed they needed more time to run tests. This was a delaying tactic. It wasn't clear to the Brits (or anyone else) whether the Ottomans would join in the approaching war and, while Britain didn't want to antagonise the Ottomans, neither did it want to deliver two state-of-the-art battleships to a potential enemy.

At the same time, two German warships, the Goeben and the Breslau, were being pursued by the Royal Navy in the Dardanelles. When these two German vessels docked in Istanbul, they were confiscated by the Three Pashas, who announced that they had been 'bought' by the empire to replace the two they had not received from the British. They were renamed Yavuz and Midilli, and while the German crews remained, they were issued with fez hats and ordered to raise the Ottoman flag.

Yavuz in Sevastopol in 1918

THE QATIF UPRISING OF 1979

Age-old enmity between ruling Sunni Muslims and the Shia minority in Saudi Arabia erupted in violence in the nation's Eastern Province as the '70s drew to a close

Words by Michael E Haskew

The dawn of the modern nation of Saudi Arabia occurred in the early 20th century, when Ibn Saud, its future king, began to assert power, recapturing the city of Riyadh, his family's ancestral home, from its arch-enemy the House of Rashid. With that victory, Ibn Saud effectively ruled all of central Arabia. For decades he consolidated power, exerting control over the region and reigning during the discovery and exploitation of oil deposits, along with the immense wealth that the commodity generated.

During his period of ascent, Ibn Saud conquered the Eastern Province on the Arabian Peninsula, wresting control from its former Ottoman rulers. The largely Shia population of the Eastern Province was concentrated around the large oases of al-Hasa and Qatif, although the vast majority of the Saudi population was of the rival Sunni affiliation. While each Muslim sect considered the other apostate or heretical, the Sunni and the House of Saud dominated the daily affairs of the Eastern Province. Although elements among the Sunni called for jihad against apostates, including the Shia, Ibn Saud and his ministers pursued a more pragmatic course, systematically marginalising the Shia, suppressing their freedom of religious and social practice and obstructing their participation in government.

Following such a perilous course alienated the Shia continually, while the Sunni pursuit of economic and religious pre-eminence, particularly since the vast majority of the country's oil reserves lay in the Eastern Province, caused the suppression of the Shia to steadily increase. Along with the Shia population, others residing in the Eastern Province also suffered. Regardless, the effort continued as Sunni 'immigrants' streamed into the area, choosing to transact business with others sharing their religious beliefs and international partners, bypassing the Shia and compounding their economic difficulties.

Management positions in Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) were reserved for Sunnis, although Shia workers were employed - albeit on a lower wage scale. Government investment in infrastructure was severely curtailed, and life in the Eastern Province became markedly disadvantaged in comparison to other, more prosperous areas of Saudi Arabia. Shia communities were among the poorest in the kingdom, often lacking adequate sanitation and utilities, while access to medical care was restricted, if allowed at all.

At the same time, the Sunni establishment moved to restrict Shia religious observances. The printing and publishing of Shia texts was prohibited, some shrines were destroyed, and calls to Shia prayer were banned. As economic, social and religious discrimination rose through the ensuing years, a simmering resentment grew in the Eastern Province. With the establishment of ARAMCO in 1933, large numbers of foreign workers arrived in the region, and a diversity of thought and political perspective took root, even as Shia clerics often urged accommodation rather than confrontation in the arena of government policy.

By the late 1960s, a call for broader Shia political participation began to emerge abroad. Among the chief proponents of the movement was the Iranian Shia cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who had

Banners of Shiite cleric and anti-government protest leader Nimr al-Nimr appear outside the Saudi embassy in Sanaa, after he was sentenced to death

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY IMAGES

The army of Ibn Saud moves forward during the future king's consolidation of power in Saudi Arabia

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

King Ibn Saud became ruler of Saudi Arabia after defeating the opposing House of Rashid and Ottoman forces

been forced to seek refuge in France from the regime of the Shah of Iran. The larger Shia worldview found a receptive audience in the Eastern Province, and in early 1979 the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran began to inspire the oppressed Shia in Saudi Arabia to take action. The pressure of more than 70 years of Sunni subjugation swiftly erupted in open conflict.

Encouraged by the victory of Khomeini's followers in Iran and the ayatollah's denunciation of the Saudi royal family, the Shia of the Eastern Province took to the streets in November 1979, igniting a four-year period of violence referred to as the Qatif Uprising.

Civil protests were particularly vocal during the months preceding the start of open hostilities, and they often occurred during Shia religious festivals. Consequently, the Sunni government banned the observance of such Shia holy days. However, the Festival of Ashura, held to commemorate the martyrdom of Hysayn ibn Ali, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, at the Battle of Karbala in 681 CE, took on increased significance when local Shia authorities announced that the holy day would be observed in direct defiance of the government ban.

In anticipation of the coming unrest, Saudi security forces - primarily the national guard - had already mobilised, rounding up large numbers of outspoken Shi, including local leaders and disgruntled youths, who were then held without charge or trial for many months. On 11 November 1979, a week after militant Shia in Iran had stormed the US embassy in Tehran and taken its personnel as hostages, American military aircraft flew into Dhahran Air Base in the Eastern Province amid strong opposition from the local population.

Two weeks later, on the day of Ashua, 4,000 Shia took to the streets in the city of Safwa on the Persian Gulf coast. By 28 November the demonstrations had spread further through the Qatif region. That night protesters gathered in Saihat, northeast of the provincial capital of Dammam. Shouting for the ousting of the ruling regime, demonstrators clashed with security forces. Attempting to maintain control of the situation, the security forces used electric prods and heavy clubs against the growing crowd. In response, a torrent of rocks and bottles was unleashed, and the Shia pressed forward with clubs and weapons of their own. Suddenly, the security forces opened fire, wounding a number of protesters, including one of their leaders, 19-year-old Hussein Mansur al-Qalaf, who had recently graduated from the ARAMCO industrial training programme. The violence persisted for a week.

As the 1979 convulsion continued, the damage to property became increasingly significant. Demonstrators burned the headquarters of the Saudi National Airline and the British bank location in Qatif. In the village of al-Awamiyya they overran the local coast guard station and attacked soldiers, gathering as many discarded weapons as they were able to carry before fleeing the scene. They occupied the ancient sector of Qatif and held the area for several days against attacks by the Saudi military. A toy store owned by a government minister was reportedly put to the torch.

Security forces set up roadblocks to prevent the spread of the violence throughout the Eastern Province and attempted to suppress the demonstrations in Safwa and Saihat. They also took control of the media, restricting the flow of news reports to the outside world. Soldiers were said to have fired on any substantial gathering of people and disrupted a funeral procession, causing the mourners to flee and abandon the body of the deceased in the street.

Young Qalaf died of his wounds, but security forces seized the body and refused to release it to the family unless the grieving relatives released a statement that the activist had died of wounds inflicted by rocks thrown by demonstrators. Finally, a week later the authorities turned the body over to the family without the required statement but still imposing the condition that no public funeral procession would occur and the burial would take place in secret.

Violence ebbed and flowed throughout early December 1979, and in a single clash ten Shia protesters were shot dead when they attempted to reach Qatif across a bridge from the island of Tarout. Security forces were known to employ heavy firepower at times, including powerful helicopter gunships, and the protesters were no match for such military strength.

Even so, this didn't deter protests, and on 3 December massive demonstrations occurred in Dammam and the city of Khobar to the southeast; 24 people were killed, while scores were wounded or taken into police custody. At the same time, the stability of the entire Saudi nation was shaken with the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by dissidents calling for the overthrow of the ruling House of Saud.

Sporadic clashes continued in the Eastern Province until 1983 and have subsequently erupted again in recent years, particularly in the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings in 2010-11, which spurred more than three years of demonstrations and violence. Estimates of the dead during the 1979 to 1983 period topped 200, while many more were wounded or jailed.

In the aftermath of the 1979 Qatif Uprising, the Saudi Government responded with overtures of an improved standard of living for the repressed Shia. Substantial funding was extended for the installation of a modernised sanitation system in Qatif, while a road building and street improvement programme was undertaken and an experimental farm was established to improve agriculture. A fund for further real estate development was established, and hospitals and schools were constructed, some of them replacing facilities destroyed during the uprising.

Although these major steps were well received and the voices of dissenters were quieted, if not muted altogether, the substantive goal of the Saudi programmes was never to initiate effective change in the governmental status quo or to truly empower the Shia minority. Rather, the expense was deemed necessary to simply placate those in need in the short term, yielding the prospect of future unrest that boiled over in later years.

Today the threat to the stability of the country and the region remains, particularly as Shia-dominated Iran continues to foment revolt against the House of Saud with rhetoric condemning its oppression of the minority in the Eastern Province. Amid such sectarian rancour, the Saudi regime faces continual challenges, ancient in origin yet each posing a very present threat.

> “TEN SHIA PROTESTERS WERE SHOT DEAD WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED TO REACH QATIF”

A Shia demonstration proceeds down a street in the city of Safwa during the period of unrest in 1979

IMAGE SOURCE: ALAMY

The first commercial oil well in Saudi Arabia, Dammam No. 7, in the Eastern Province, erupted in March 1938

THE DEATH OF NIMR AL-NIMR

A Shia cleric's execution in 2016 is indicative of the continuing strife between the House of Saud and the minority of the Eastern Province

On 2 January 2016, Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr, long a thorn in the side of the Saudi regime, was executed along with 46 other dissidents in the Saudi capital city of Riyadh. The 56-year-old cleric had often spoken out against the House of Saud and called for free elections throughout the country. He even suggested that the Eastern Province should secede, prompting his arrest along with 35 others in 2009.

Three years earlier, al-Nimr had been arrested, claiming upon his release that he had been severely beaten in captivity. In 2012, he assumed a leading role in a renewal of Sunni versus Shia sectarian violence. He was wounded in the leg when Saudi security forces fired into a crowd of protesters and then undertook a hunger strike in prison. He later alleged that he was again severely beaten. On 15 October 2014, al-Nimr was convicted of seeking foreign meddling in Saudi Arabia, disobeying the nation's rulers and taking up arms against the security forces. He was sentenced to death and executed two years later amid warnings from Shia Iran that severe consequences would follow. The fate of al-Nimr became, according to human rights observers, another chapter in the long Saudi campaign to crush all forms of dissent.

Al-Nimr's face has been used during demonstrations since his execution

The terror attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 was part of al-Qaeda's self-declared holy war against the USA

MODERN WARS OF RELIGION

Discover how religion still has the power to move modern militaries

Words by Scott Reeves

The Western world is increasingly secular with a steadily shrinking minority engaged in regular worship. Perhaps that's why the 9/11 terror attacks on the US in 2001 were shocking – a reminder of the lengths that believers are prepared to go in the name of religion.

Sometimes conflict occurs when states with different religions face off against each other; the fighting can be equally bloody if the states belong to different denominations of the same religion. The Iran-Iraq War was not just a struggle for pre-eminence in the Middle East; it was also a struggle between Shia and Sunni Islam.

Religion has also been a causal factor in many civil wars that have raged since 1945. Denominational fallouts have weighed so heavily on some nations that conflict has ensued.

The historical context of the Northern Irish Troubles is long and complicated, but there's little doubt that three decades of violence from 1969 to 1998 stemmed from long-standing tension between Catholic and Protestant communities. Religion has stoked nationalist and ethnic tensions for thousands of years, and modern conflict suggests it will continues to do so for some time to come.

The fighting in the mountainous landscape of Kashmir has posed considerable logistical problems for both sides

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY

INDO-PAKISTANI WARS

1947-1949, 1965, 1971, 1999

The religious partition backed by nuclear weapons

The partition of India after more than three centuries of British rule led to the creation of two states: Muslim-majority Pakistan and Hindu-majority India. Ever since, the flashpoint between the two nations has been Kashmir, a state on the border whose princely ruler was allowed to choose whether to remain independent or join India or Pakistan. The first Kashmir War occurred only two months after partition when Pakistan forces tried to seize still-independent Kashmir, but the invasion only pushed ruler Maharaja Hari Singh to join with India to gain military aid. The year-long war ended in a ceasefire with Kashmir split along the Line of Control.

The uneasy ceasefire line has stood ever since, despite declarations of war in 1965, 1971 and 1999, and other skirmishes and standoffs. The potential for devastation of a war on the subcontinent increased exponentially when India added nuclear weapons to its armoury in 1974. Tension ramped up when both countries carried out a series of nuclear tests in 1998 but the clash didn't go beyond a war of words. Fighting that has broken out since has thankfully remained non-nuclear in nature, though soldiers and civilians continue to die in incidents on the border.

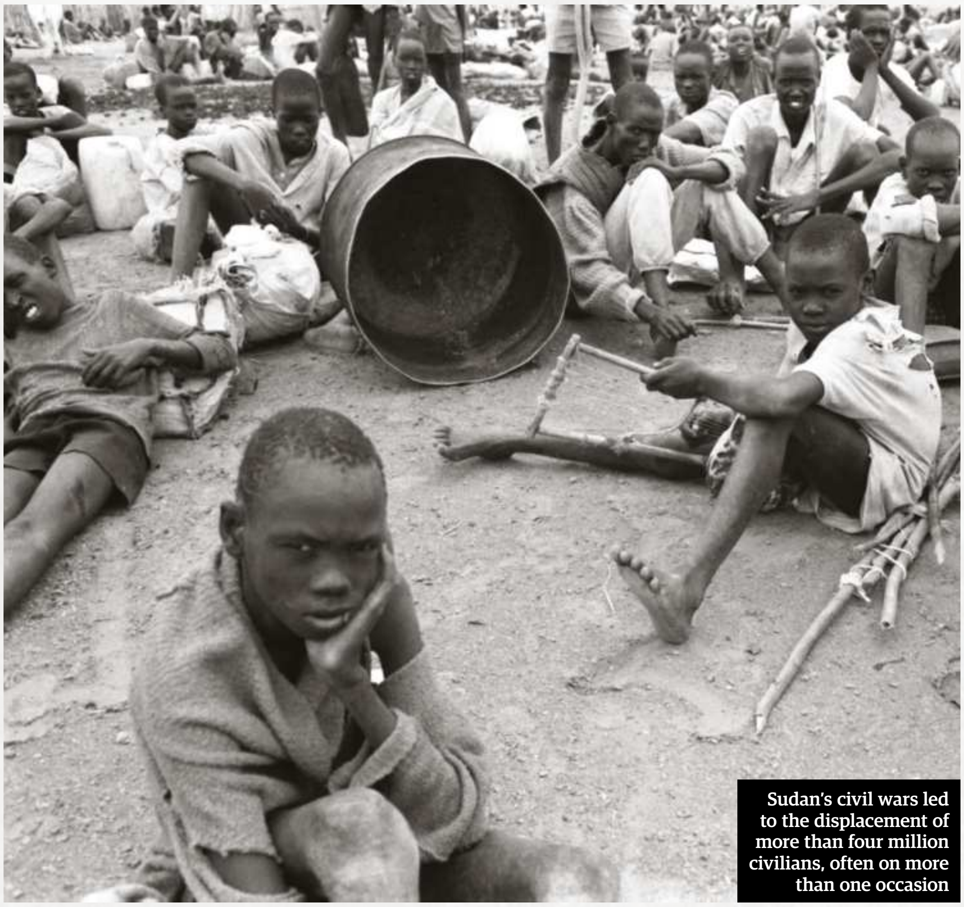
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT 1948-PRESENT

The seven-decade struggle for the Holy Land

Although the area known to Christians as the Holy Land has been the location of religious clashes for thousands of years, the present conflict stems from the creation of the Jewish state of Israel from the British Mandate of Palestine in 1948. In order to protect the interests of Palestinian Arabs, Egypt and Jordan fought a war with Israel that ended in the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank and Egyptian control of the Gaza Strip. Palestinian efforts to form a cohesive government were eventually quashed by Egypt's short-lived United Arab Republic before being revived under the flag of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The 1967 Six-Day War saw a lightning attack by Israel that ended with the seizure of the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. It left the PLO able to fight an insurgency campaign only, launching attacks from neighbouring Arab states, but the intermittent foreign-led peace process led to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority as a governing body in the Gaza Strip and portions of the West Bank. Negotiations are ongoing, but so are sporadic attacks and acts of violence.

A PLO uprising in 2000 led to Israel withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and building the West Bank barrier



Sudan's civil wars led to the displacement of more than four million civilians, often on more than one occasion

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY

SUDANESE CIVIL WARS

1955-72, 1983-2005

The 39 years of fighting caused by religious fractures

Even as its flag was hoisted for the first time in Khartoum after the country gained independence from Britain and Egypt in 1956, the new Sudanese leadership faced a rebellion in the south. The north of the country had been largely Muslim for 500 years and fell under Egypt's pan-Arab sphere of influence, while the south was primarily inhabited by Christians and followers of traditional African religions. Nevertheless, the government was almost wholly comprised of northerners. Arabic was named the administrative language across the country and southerners feared that Sharia law would be imposed on them.

The small-scale revolt grew into a secessionist movement that threatened to tear the country apart. The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement temporarily ended the war by granting the south more autonomy, but it collapsed after little more than a decade. The second period of civil war was particularly vicious, with mass killings, ethnic cleansing, child soldiers, forced labour and slavery. It led to widespread drought, starvation and population displacement, leading to the deaths of around two million civilians. Six years after the Naivasha Agreement brought the war to an end, a referendum resulted in independence for South Sudan.

YUGOSLAV WARS

1991-2001

The multi-ethnic war ignited in the ashes of communism

A communist dictatorship held Yugoslavia together for almost 50 years after the end of the Second World War, but the collapse of the USSR and the fall of the iron curtain saw the multi-ethnic federal state fracture along religious lines. The republics of Slovenia and Croatia sported Catholic majorities, while Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia were Eastern Orthodox, and Bosnia-Herzegovina had a Muslim majority.

A series of wars followed as the republics jostled for position, either as part of a reconstituted Yugoslavia or as independent states. The Serbian government of Slobodan Milošević used the conflict as an excuse to attempt to seize parts of Bosnia and Croatia with Serbian populations; territorial claims were also made by Croatia on parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbian territories of Kosovo and the Presevo Valley also sought independence for their predominantly Muslim populations, with the status of Kosovo still in dispute.

The rancorous divisions led to state-sponsored ethnic cleansing by Serbia and Croatia, with forced migrations and the destruction of places of worship to alter the ethnic balance of regions in their favour. Mass killings also took place, with the massacre of 8,372 Bosnian Muslims by Serbian forces in Srebrenica in July 1995 being named the first European genocide since the Holocaust.

The siege of Dubrovnik damaged more than half of the buildings in the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY

The Bangui Muslim population has dropped 99 per cent following an exodus during the civil war

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CIVIL WAR

2012-PRESENT

The religious stalemate in the middle of Africa

The most recent example of civil war in the troubled Central African Republic ignited when the government was accused of breaking the terms of a peace agreement. Power was seized by the Muslim Seleka coalition of rebel groups and Michel Djotodia declared himself president. A counter-revolution led by a primarily Christian coalition known as Anti-Balaka sought to regain power, and though the Seleka coalition fell apart shortly after taking power, ex-Seleka factions continue to battle with Anti-Balaka. Since late 2014 the Central African Republic has effectively been partitioned, with rebel Anti-Balaka controlling the south and west, and the government and ex-Seleka maintaining power in the north and east.

Violence was particularly endemic in Anti-Balaka territory, with reports of massacres and forced conversions of Muslims. Included in rebel-held land was the capital, Bangui, where the Muslim former health minister Joseph Kalite was lynched in January 2014. The unrest led to an exodus of Muslims into ex-Seleka land and neighbouring Chad. With militant bands on both sides carving out their own areas of control, tensions have flared within each group, harming the chances of peace negotiations being successfully adopted throughout the country.

IRAQI CIVIL WAR 2014-17

The rise and fall of radical Islamic State

The instability in Iraq that followed the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003 moved from an insurgency against the occupying forces and foreign-backed government into full civil war when armies fighting under the flag of Islamic State conquered vast swathes of northern Iraq and neighbouring Syria in 2014. Islamic State's puritanical form of Sunni Islam aimed to create a new worldwide caliphate under its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who claimed to be the successor to Prophet Muhammad. The millions of Iraqis under Islamic State rule lived under a strict form of Sharia law with very little acknowledgement of criticism or alternative views.

Over three years the Iraqi government, with considerable foreign military support including air strikes and special force operations, clawed back lost territory. Islamic State lost control of its largest city, Mosul, in July 2017 and continued to suffer defeats until the end of the year when it no longer held any meaningful territory in the country. Although Islamic State had collapsed after holding one-third of Iraq only three years earlier, the civil war reverted to an ongoing insurgency and Islamic State continued to mount terrorist attacks and paramilitary operations.

The recapture of Tal Afar in September 2017 saw Islamic State lose one of its few remaining strategic strongholds

IMAGE SOURCE: GETTY

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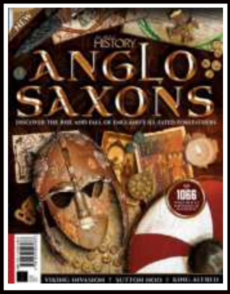
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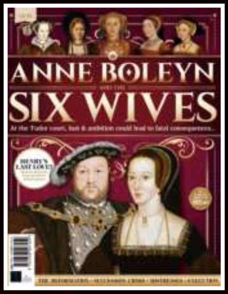
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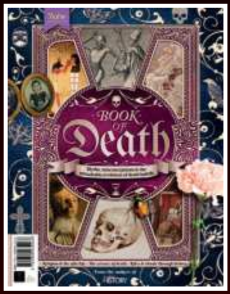
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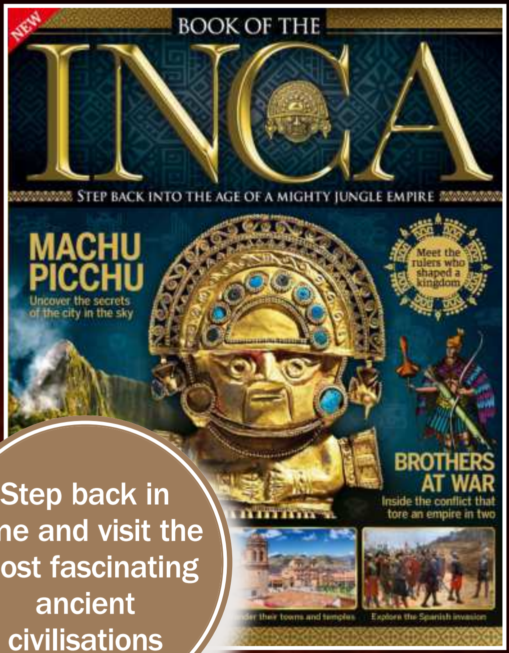
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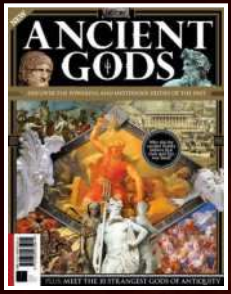
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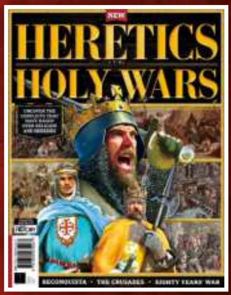
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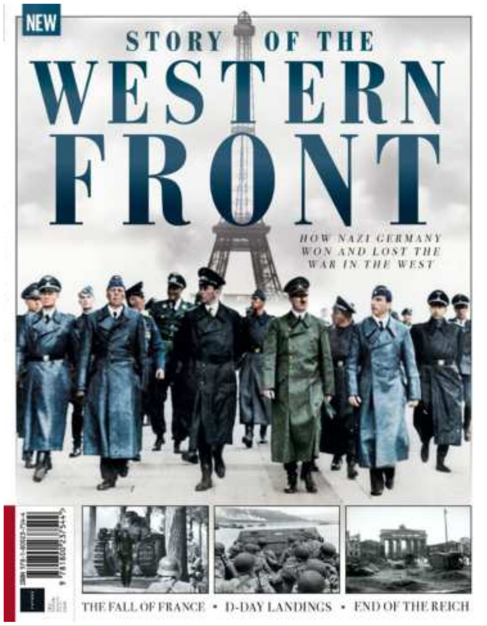
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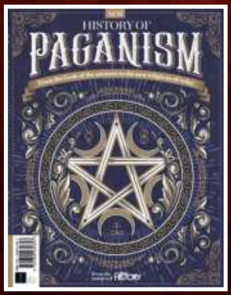
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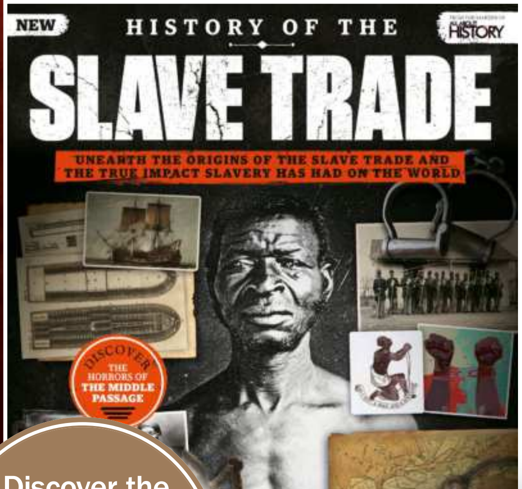
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